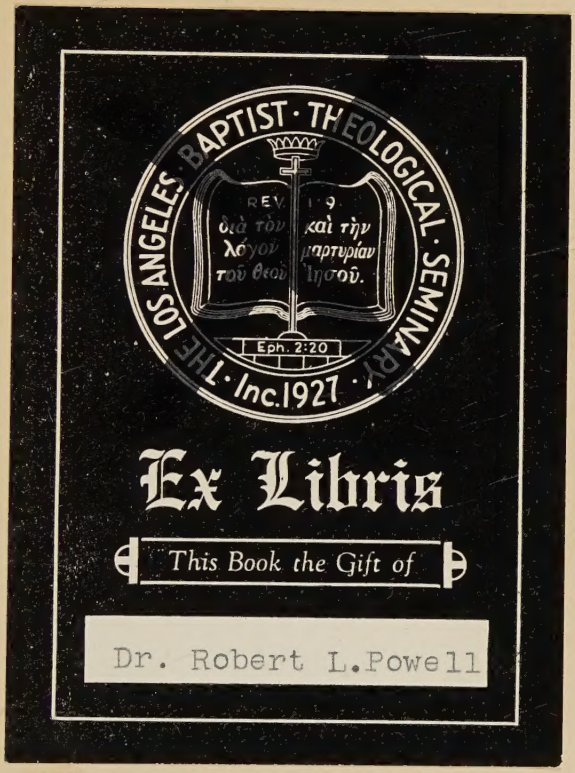
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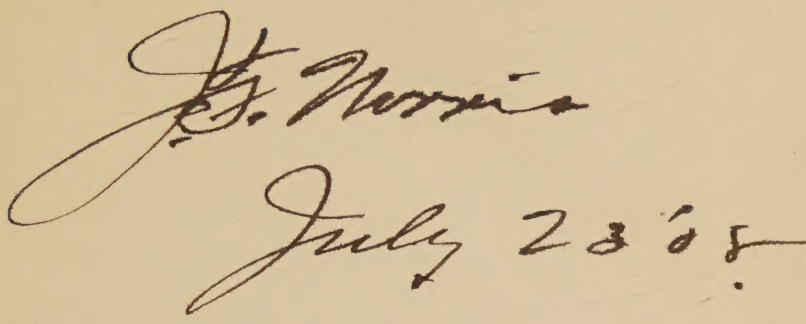

THE CHRISTIC REIGN

THE CHRISTIC REIGN

AND OTHER SERMONS

By

ROBERT STUART MACARTHUR

Minister of Calvary Baptist Church, New York
since May 15, 1870

Author of

"From the Invasion of Canaan to the Last of the Judges," "Calvary Pulpit," "Divine Balustrades," "The Attractive Christ," "Quick Truths in Quaint Texts," "Current Questions for Thinking Men," "Sunday Night Lectures on Palestine," "The Celestial Lamp," "Old Testament Difficulties," "The Question of the Centuries," "Old Book and Old Faith," "Around the World," "Quick Truths in Quaint Texts" (Second Series), "Calvary Hymnal," "Laudes Domini," "In Excelsis," "People's Worship and Psalter," "Advent and Other Sermons."

I say the acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the world and out of it,
And hath so far advanced thee to be wise.
—*BROWNING.*

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To

MY FRIEND OF COLLEGE DAYS
AND THE BUSY YEARS SINCE

Rev. Philip L. Jones, D. D.

BOOK EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY, UNDER WHOSE SUPERVISION THIS BOOK AND MANY COMPANION VOLUMES HAVE ISSUED FROM THE PRESS

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PREFACE

Most of the sermons in this volume were recently preached on consecutive Sunday mornings in Calvary Church. The first one in the volume was preached in Washington before the three national societies, May 19, 1907. The second also was prepared for a similar occasion. A time of spiritual refreshing was enjoyed by Calvary Church during the delivery of these sermons. Several of them were owned of God in immmediate conversions. The aim was to exalt Christ as the Saviour of men; and he graciously drew goodly numbers to himself. To his Name be all the praise!

The Author.

Calvary Study, New York.

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The Christic Reign

I

THE CHRISTIC REIGN

Text: Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of Jehovah will perform this.—Isa. 9 : 7.

BEAUTIFUL for situation is Constantinople, the city of Constantine. As seen from the sea, its aspect is picturesque and magnificent. It is situated at the entrance of the Bosphorus, on a triangular peninsula formed by the Golden Horn and the sea of Marmora. The hilly shores of this sea are adorned with villas and gardens, making a scene of rare beauty. But when the city is entered, its streets are found to be narrow, crooked, and filthy; many of the houses are dilapidated, and the entire atmosphere is filled with offensive odors.

There are in Constantinople, it is said, not fewer than five hundred of the larger mosques, known as *jamihs;* and there are from four to five thousand

of the smaller mosques, known as *mesjids*. It is well known that the mosque of Saint Sophia, *Agia Sofia*, "Holy Wisdom," or the "Logos," is far and away the most celebrated structure in Constantinople. It was formerly the Church of Saint Sophia. This church was founded in 325, by the Emperor Constantine, to commemorate the transference of the seat of the empire to Byzantium. The earlier structure was rebuilt and enlarged by Constantius, the son of Constantine; this second church was destroyed in 404, and was rebuilt by Theodosius the younger in 415. It was finally rebuilt by Justinian in 532-8. Ten thousand men are said to have been employed upon the structure. Every portion of the empire made a contribution of materials, some being taken from pagan monuments. The green jasper columns are said to have been taken from the celebrated Temple of Diana at Ephesus. The church is the masterpiece of Byzantine architecture; it was one of the epoch-making buildings of the world. Its architect was Anthemius, a Greek mathematician, engineer, and architect. In the construction of this church, he was the founder of the developed Byzantine style.

The building was transformed into a mosque by Mohammed II in 1453, when the Turks captured Constantinople. At that time, all the Christian emblems were either destroyed, or covered by a coating of plaster. The latter course was followed in the case of all mosaic pictures which represented

the human figure, such representations being proscribed by the Koran. It thus came to pass that the mosaics, for the most part, escaped destruction.

A few years ago I visited Constantinople at a time of great excitement in the city. An uprising against the Armenians had taken place, and toward them the Moslems still showed great bitterness. Many of the bazaars were closed, and in other bazaars the Armenians were found cowering behind their desks or counters. I had read that the superb mosaic of the face of Christ, in the lofty dome, was partly uncovered, as the plaster had been flaking off for some time. My dragoman warned me against attracting the attention of the excited Moslems by looking for Christian symbols. While my dragoman took the guardian of the mosque aside for a moment, I turned my glass to the dome, and there beheld in beautiful mosaic some features of the Christ now appearing to view, after having been so long hidden by plaster, because of the superstition and hatred of the Moslems. Even Moslem fanaticism cannot forever hide the glorious face of the divine Christ.

One purpose of creation and revelation is to unveil the face of Christ. The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Creation is a revelation of God. The human soul cries out for God, and all forms of revelation are God's response to this universal cry. But, unfortunately, type and symbol, intended to reveal the

Christ, often hide his face. To-day traditions, superstitions, rites, ceremonies, and creeds are frequently the plaster which covers the glorious face of the Son of God. One object of the ministry is to remove this plaster, and to reveal the Christ. This sublime service Isaiah performed as did no other writer of the Old Testament. His prophecies often seem more like histories than prophecies. The verses which immediately precede my text seem to be the dome of the temple of divine revelation. As we look upward to the dome of that temple, we seem to see the unveiled face of the Christ; and around that unveiled face we can read the sublime collocation of lofty titles of the Christ: "Wonderful," "Counsellor," "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," "Prince of Peace." Thus the face and the names of the Christ are gloriously revealed. The text is a statement of the characteristics of the government of the Messiah, whose august titles have just been pronounced. This is the ideal government for all the nations of the earth.

A Personal Government.

We discover, in the first place, that the Messiah's government is *Personal*. In the preceding verse, we are told that "the government shall be upon his shoulder." This statement implies that he, in his own person, should wear the royal purple. Perhaps it refers to some symbol of the government, such as a scepter, sword, or key, which should be borne

upon the shoulder. It is certain that Jesus rules this world; that his pierced hand is on the scepter of the universe, and that his will is law in heaven above and on earth beneath. God stands in personal relations with creation and providence. He is immanent in his universe. God is not dead; neither is he asleep, nor on a journey. Jesus Christ has never abdicated his throne. No mandate of materialism can ever banish God from his universe. He walks amid his stars in sublime majesty; but he walks no less amid his grapevines and rose-bushes in creative power and ornative glory. He treads the Milky Way in unique splendor; but no less does he the lowliest vales trodden by his humblest saints.

The doctrine of the universality of law in no way militates against the idea of the universality of God's presence, and the continuity of God's activity in creation and providence. What do men mean by law, when they speak of law as governing the universe? Men often speak of law as if it somehow were possessed of personality and potency in and of itself. So to speak of law is utterly to misconceive law. Law, in this connection, is simply the name which we give to the manner in which we have observed some force to act. If the force is material, we have a physical law; if the force is mental, we have an intellectual law; if the force is moral, we have a spiritual law. Law is not a force, but a form; law is not a power, but a process; law is not an actor, but an action; law is not an agent,

but an agency. Back of the form, is the force; back of the process, is the power; back of the action, is the actor; back of the agency, is the agent. At all these points stands God. Law implies a lawgiver; the lawgiver is God. Order implies an ordainer; the ordainer is God.

The doctrine of evolution, rightly understood, does not eliminate God. There may be an agnostic and even an atheistic evolution; but there may be also a theistic and even a Christic evolution. Nothing can be evolved which has not first been involved. The involver is God. Evolution may not be yet scientifically established, but we may at least receive the doctrine as a working hypothesis. A true conception of evolution, by putting God farther back in the scale of development, may add to his creative wisdom and his providential prescience. Jesus Christ is going before the nations to-day as he went before Israel of old, with pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. He has led the American people during the past few years, as truly as he led the Israelites under Moses and Joshua, or by David and Solomon. Loftier than all the thrones of earth, and mightier than all the scepters of czars, emperors, and kings, is the august throne, and is the resistless scepter of the Christ of God.

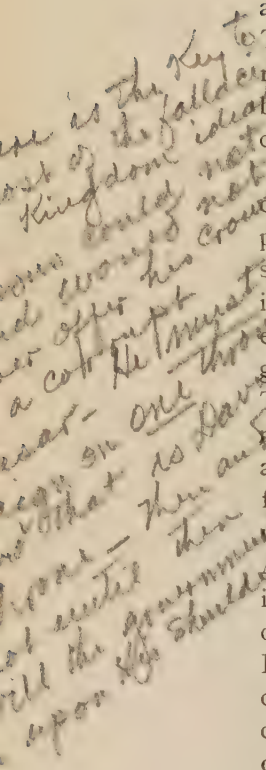
A Progressive Government.

We are distinctly informed, in the second place, that the Messiah's government is *Progressive*—" Of

the increase of his government there shall be no end." Nothing is more certain than that the dominion of Jesus Christ is to extend to the ends of the earth, and to every interest of the human race.

It is impossible to overstate the apparent impotency of Christ's kingdom when he lay dead in Joseph's tomb. Nothing was more unlikely of accomplishment than his command given on an unknown mountain to a handful of disciples to go out to secure the mastership of the world. They were men without an army, without a navy, and without any of the munitions of war. In giving that command, Christ showed himself to be the foremost thinker of the world. Other founders of religion were ethnic, racial, or at most, only national in their sympathies and ambitions. Theirs was a religion for a locality, a race, or a cult; but Jesus Christ, for the first time in human history, proclaimed a religion equally needed by, adapted to, and intended for all classes and conditions of men in all countries and centuries. Confucius, Zoroaster, and Buddha were provincial in sympathy, ambition, and endeavor. Even Judaism, notwithstanding its occasional unlimited outlook, became by the misinterpretations of its expounders, sectional, racial, and even provincial. A similar remark applies to the cults of classic Greece and Rome. Jesus Christ was the first great cosmopolitan thinker. He is unique in this respect, as in all respects, among the founders of religions; he is, as the Germans say, "*Der Einzige.*"

Away over the rocky hills of Palestine went the preachers of the glad tidings. Soon the islands of the Ægean became stepping-stones for the feet of "the sacramental host of God's elect." Ancient philosophies, hoary traditions, classic mythologies, all disappeared before the simple story of the cross. The cross battered down the walls of heathen error; soon it became the symbol of victory on the banners of armies, and finally, Christ was recognized on the throne of the descendants of the Cæsars.



His government is progressive also, in that it contemplates introducing its spirit into every department of human thought and life. We have seen in recent years a great extension of this spirit in art and science. The materialism of even a generation ago has largely disappeared. Science, in great part, is becoming docile, dutiful, and reverent. The undevout scientist is disloyal to the fundamental principles of true science; indeed, he is only a sciolist and not a scientist. True scientism ever follows in the footsteps of divine truth. I claim the whole sphere of science and art for Jesus Christ. Agnosticism can write no immortal poetry. Enduring music is religious music. The operettas of the day are for the day. Mozart, Handel, Haydn, Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and other great musicians, and the immortal painters and sculptors, caught their inspiration from the divine Christ; only as men are so inspired can they sing, paint, and chisel for eternity.

The government of Christ is progressive also in its territorial inclusion; the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. The heathen are to be given to him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. The tumultuous nations which are seen in the Second psalm as taking counsel against the Lord—even these are to be the Messiah's inheritance. His kingdom shall stretch from the rivers unto the ends of the earth; it shall reach from pole to pole. All kings shall bow down and worship him. All providences are hastening the fulfilment of these prophecies; the eye of faith sees the banner of Immanuel above the flag of every nation. The gates of Tibet and the doors of Africa are wide open. Electricity is a spark from the Eternal Flame, and God will use it to illumine the world with the light of truth. The discoverers of modern science are the messengers of the Almighty.

Just when destructive critics are casting doubt on the virgin birth of Christ, science comes forward with its theory of parthenogenesis. All true science is of God. In this science there are vast possibilities confirmatory of the divine-human birth. Just when men had denied the resurrection of Christ and man's immortality, there arose Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Cæsar Lombroso, Charles Richet, Dr. Joseph Maxwell, Wallace, James, and others, on both sides of the sea, trained scientists, who are aiming to prove scientifically

the immortality of the soul and the reality of the spiritual world. These men are making spiritual realities easily believable. Science is becoming a stout witness for God. Science is really the porter of the presence-chamber of the Almighty.

There has also been great progress in the formulation of theological truths. We have learned that long and so-called strong creeds do not conserve true Christian doctrine. The so-called Apostles' Creed the apostles never saw, never heard, and possibly, would not fully endorse. The last apostle was centuries in heaven before that creed, in its present form, was promulgated. The Nicene Creed was a compromise of such fiercely warring churchmen, that Constantine was obliged to send soldiers to quell their riots. The Athanasian Creed Athanasius never wrote, and the use of his name in connection with it is a case of abominable dishonesty. Its " damnatory clauses " ought never to be attached to any human composition. The Sunday when it is recited in the Anglican churches is called " Damnation Sunday." Augustinianism and Calvinism, with their doctrine of election and consequent reprobation, together with the idea that infant baptism was necessary to infant salvation, made Colonel Ingersoll an atheist. Such doctrines are the *alma mater* of atheism every day. We are better able to make creeds to-day than ever were men in the past. We have learned much since the days of Augustine, Turretin, Calvin, Luther, and Bunyan. Creeds

made by men in one generation can be remade or unmade by men in another generation. Creeds are the procrustean bed for the torture of theological thinkers. It is easier to interpret the Scriptures on which the creeds are supposed to be founded, than to interpret the creeds. Baptists occupy an enviable position; the word of God is their only rule of faith and practice. This word has an ever-enlarging significance, making it the contemporary of all ages.

Nothing is more certain than that the government of Christ shall be progressive, until all kings, all governments, all sciences, and all arts shall find their noblest ambitions and their loftiest achievements in lying in lowliest reverence at the pierced feet of Jesus Christ.

A Peaceful Government.

The Messiah's government is a *Peaceful Government.* Among the sublime titles given to the Messiah in the preceding verse of this chapter, no title is more suggestive than "The Prince of Peace." It must be admitted that often the incidental result of the preaching of Christ is not harmony, but discord. He taught us that his gospel would set members of families against one another, so that a man's foes should be they of his own household. For this discord, however, Christian faith is not responsible; it is caused by the fact that error is blind, bigotry is pitiless, and sin is cruel. It is better that there should be discord than a hollow peace

without righteousness, and with injustice and serfdom. Douglas Jerrold spoke the truth when he said, "We love peace as we abhor pusillanimity; but not peace at any price. . . Chains are worse than bayonets." Theodore Roosevelt was right when he emphasized, in his letter to the recent Peace Congress in New York, the importance of peace with honor and righteousness. Christ as the Prince of Peace brings the soul into harmony with God. Sin separates us from our Father in heaven. It inevitably produces condemnation on his part, and consternation on our part. It ends in complete alienation between God and man. In Christ the lost harmony is restored; and being justified by faith, we have peace with God. Christ restores harmony within our own souls. Sin is the great troubler of the human heart. It arrays against one another conscience and passion, reason and desire, all noble loves and all ignoble lusts. When Christ comes into the heart, the true order of affections and desires is established. He resets the entire spiritual nature; all spiritual powers then take their rightful positions and discharge their appropriate functions. The moment he is admitted to the heart there is a great calm throughout the whole nature, and men experience divine rest in their deepest souls.

Christ brings peace into the social and industrial world. In him all ambitions are sanctified, and all endeavors celestialized. When the Golden Rule is dominant, conflicts between capital and labor will

cease. Capital will then be just and considerate, and labor then will be honest and efficient. Love is mightier than law. The Golden Rule will make strikes an impossibility. Its dominance will make the Eastern sky radiant with the crimson and gold of millennial dawn. Christ, as the Prince of Peace, will establish harmony among all the nations of the earth. International arbitration will then settle all international disputes. After their terrible expenditure of treasure and blood on land and sea, Russia and Japan at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, by compromise, conciliation, and concession, settled their painful conflict. How much wiser had they met for such settlement before they fired a gun or sacrificed a life! The foolishness of war is as conspicuous as its wickedness. The time has come when we should learn that "the man on horseback" is not necessarily the greatest of heroes. The man who preserves life, as physician, philanthropist, discoverer, educator, and preacher, may be a truer hero than the man who destroys life in battle. The world is much in need of new ideals of manliness and heroism. Patriotism may be as truly manifested at the ballot-box as on the battlefield. It is time that we learned to say with Milton:

> Peace hath her victories,
> No less renowned than war.

The time is coming when the words of Micah shall be literally fulfilled, the time when the nations

"shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." The Hague Tribunal is here, and here to stay. Its achievements during the past few years have far surpassed the hopes of its most enthusiastic supporters. The recent Peace Congress in New York was an epoch-making event. Edward VII, the Emperor of Germany, and the President of the United States are all laudably ambitious to take their places among the great peacemakers of the world. The interdependence of nations now is such, that any nation that unjustly breaks the peace, merits the rebuke, and will receive the contempt and ostracism of all civilized nations. The day is coming when the song of the angels which echoed over the plains of Bethlehem the night that the Christ was born, shall be realized throughout the civilized world: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Then, indeed, Christ will be enthroned as Prince of Peace.

A Prerogative Government.

This government is a *Prerogative Government;* Christ is to sit "upon the throne of David"; it belongs to him as his exclusive or peculiar privilege. He holds it by prior and indefeasible right. His right to it may be asserted without question; and he is not called upon to account for the manner of its exercise. He is seated upon the throne of David.

His claim to this throne is in accordance with the promise made to David, and frequently repeated by prophets and psalmists. The Messiah was to reign over the people of God in all lands and at all times; he was to order and establish his throne with judgment and justice; and his administration was to be just and righteous. Most of the kingdoms of the earth have been established by iniquity, but the administration of the Messiah is to be extended and perpetuated in righteousness.

This truth it is impossible for us unduly to emphasize. All workers in the kingdom of God know that they are serving a just Master, and that they are laboring in harmony with eternal righteousness. In Christ it is eternally true that "righteousness and peace have kissed each other." He is a king reigning in righteousness, having magnified the law and made it honorable. There is thus every encouragement to labor and to pray for the universal extension of this prerogative government. A missionary church is in harmony with the eternal purpose of God. He demands our help in the establishment of the Messiah's reign. It is the glory of the church that it be a fellow-worker with Christ in the extension of his kingdom. To extend this kingdom is the ultimate purpose of all the forces of modern civilization. For thus purpose ships are built, railways constructed, telegraph lines erected, and wireless telegraphy was discovered. For this purpose men become millionaires. Money finds its true use when

laid on the altar of Jesus Christ. Why has not some man given millions of dollars for mission work in heathen lands? Are not educational institutions in heathen lands as needed as in Christian lands? Why has not some man founded great academies, colleges, and universities in Japan, China, and India? Who will have the honor of leading in this work? When will the man come forward who will make his name immortal by laying millions on God's altar for foreign missions? Thus may God's true children truly honor the prerogative government of the Lord's Christ.

A Perpetual Government.

The Messiah's government is a *Perpetual Government.* In the great mosque standing in the midst of a spacious quadrangle in Damascus, the oldest city of the world, a mosque larger than the historic mosque of Omar in Jerusalem, there still stands, as if in defiance of the crescent which long has usurped the place of the cross, this noble inscription above the principal door: " Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endures throughout all generations." This inscription is prophetic, not only of the day when Jesus shall reign over the hearts of the Damascenes, but when he shall reign over all men of all climes, creeds, and colors. It is strange, indeed, that Moslem fanaticism should have allowed this inscription to remain over the principal door of this consecrated mosque.

We are distinctly informed that the reign of the Messiah will be "from henceforth even forever." We are assured also that "the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." In connection with the text, it is affirmed that the Messiah is the Father of Eternity. He is from everlasting to everlasting; he is the origin of all being. He will have no rival and can have no successor. His servants must labor for the establishment of his kingdom until the utmost limits of the earth and the last moments of time are reached. His name is to be praised from the rising of the sun until the going down of the same. His government can never be superseded by a higher and better dominion; and against it the gates of hades can never prevail. Its triumph means liberty and law, peace and prosperity, civilization and Christianity. It means the universal recognition of the fatherhood of God, and so of the brotherhood of man. We are assured that the zeal of God is pledged to this result. The Lord Jehovah has purposed to establish the kingdom of his Messiah on the earth. Right is eternal, and will certainly prevail. The long and weary night of sorrow and sin will give place to the dawn of a glorious day of peace, purity, and joy. This government is the unifier of all the antagonistic interests in industrial, civil, political, and religious life. In Christ all conflicts cease, and in him all blessings have their origin. In his dominance, the dream of Burns shall be literally realized;

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Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that,
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, and a' that,
For a' that, and a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man the world o'er,
Shall brithers be for a' that.

To the thought of God the world is a vast cathedral. The eye of faith sees in its lofty dome the face of Christ as creator, preserver, redeemer, and king. Creation is revelation; it is the unveiling of the hand and, to some degree also, of the heart of God. Preservation is continuous creation, revealing God's wisdom, power, and love. Revelation is a fuller display of all the attributes of the Almighty. There is no contradiction between natural and revealed religion; rightly understood, nature and the supernatural are in perfect harmony. To God nothing is supernatural; to us the supernatural becomes natural when we master the laws which God employs in the governance of his universe. The universe is a *uni*verse. Theologians have done unspeakable harm when they have thought that they were honoring the God of revelation in proportion as they minimized the God of creation. The written Bible, or the Bible of Scripture, is in perfect harmony with the unwritten bible, or the bible of nature. The God of Scripture and the God of nature is one God. God speaks to us in his twofold Bible of Scripture and of nature. This thought the church has largely

forgotten; had the church remembered this truth, there would be less infidelity in the academy and more faith in the church.

Undevout science, unscientific religion, tradition, infidelity, bigotry, and superstition have drawn veils over the face of Jesus Christ, both as Creator and as Redeemer. In every great religious reformation, some of these veils have been removed. The highest duty of religion and science to-day is to unveil the face of God in Jesus Christ. When this glorious face is unveiled, we shall hear the divine Christ say to us, as he said to Philip, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." The vision of the revealed Christ is a foretaste of heaven. The day is coming when we shall see him face to face, shall know him even as we are known, and shall be like him in his spotless purity, radiant glory, and divine effulgence. This will be heaven in its ineffable blessedness, its hallowed experiences and its divine revelations. In this renewed earth Christ shall reign without an enemy, and all his ideals shall be realized. In that blessed day our ambitions shall be so spiritualized, and our characters so celestialized that we shall become like unto his own glorious Person as Son of man and Son of God!

II

THE BASILIC PSALM

Text: The Second psalm.

EVEN the cursory reader of the Second psalm discovers that it is a dramatic poem of a high order. Like the First psalm, it is without any title, and without any indication of its authorship. But in the Acts of the Apostles 4:25, it is distinctly affirmed that David is its author. This is the common opinion among Hebrew writers regarding its origin; and the character of the poem is in harmony with this supposition. The great design of the psalm is to foretell the hatred of men to the person and reign of the Lord's anointed, the glories of this Messiah, the downfall of his enemies, and the certain triumph of his kingdom. It is the first of the prophetic psalms in which the promise made to David, with respect to the Messiah, is wrought into the lyrical devotions of the ancient church. Some writers affirm that there is no connection in thought, nor similarity in structure, between the First and the Second psalms; but a closer investigation shows that there is a genuine affinity between these two poems; indeed, they have sometimes been written as one psalm. The number of verses and stanzas

in the Second psalm is just double those of the First. The Second begins, as the First ends, with a threatening; and the Second ends, as the First begins, with a beatitude. The First is an introduction to the Second; and we shall not err in saying that both the First and Second are really an introduction to the entire Psalter.

Perowne calls attention to the fact that the Second psalm rings with the tramp of gathering armies, and with the notes of lofty challenge, addressed by the poet to the invaders of his country. He suggests that the poem was written when Jerusalem was threatened by a confederacy of hostile powers; and that these hostile powers were vassal monarchs. He infers from the language which the poet puts into their mouths, "Let us break their bands asunder," that these allies had been subdued in earlier wars, and that they were now seizing an opportunity to assert their former independence. The song was probably written when the news of their approach reached Jerusalem; and the poet desires to encourage his countrymen to cherish hopes of victory by remembering the covenant made with David's house.

Interpreters constantly attempt to discover the historic events which occasioned the poem. It can very naturally be connected with the history recorded in second Samuel, tenth chapter. We there find a confederacy of Syrians, Ammonites, and others who had formerly been subdued, and who

were now struggling for the restoration of their independence. But we must bear in mind that, although the poem was occasioned by some great national event, we are not to limit its application to any one event in the history of Israel. The author must have felt that his words, in their ultimate application, were quite beyond the occasion which led him to write the poem. Beginning with an earthly king, and with wars upon the earth, his words rise beyond earthly to heavenly conflicts and conquests; thus the local is swallowed up in the universal, and the temporal in the eternal. The king who sits on David's throne is only suggestive of Him who sits on the throne of the universe, and reigns over all the nations of the earth. The poem is thus connected with the present only as it is typical and prophetical of the future. The true king is the universal and eternal Ruler over the nations of the earth, enthroned in heavenly glory.

In its construction, the psalm is one of the most perfect in the Psalter, according to the recognized rules of Hebrew poetry. It naturally falls into four stanzas, or strophes, of three verses each. It is throughout a perfect drama. It could readily be dramatized, as the action is carried on by different speakers who take their parts in order. In the first stanza, or strophe, the conduct of the rebellious nations is described; in the second, we have the reply of God both by word and deed; in the third, the Anointed One appears declaring the divine de-

cree in relation to himself; and in the last, the psalmist exhorts the rulers to submit to the authority of Jehovah, threatening divine wrath to the disobedient, and promising a benediction to all who submit to divine authority.

Tumultuous Assembly of the Nations—The First Strophe, Verses 1-3.

In verses 1-3, we have a view of the tumultuous nations. The opening of the psalm is bold and abrupt. The writer looks out suddenly on the nations and sees them in violent commotion. They are discovered while engaged in a deep plot against the plans of Jehovah and his Anointed One. They are united in their counsels, and are determined to break asunder the bands of God's authority. They are resolved to prevent the establishment of the Anointed as king on the holy hill of Zion. The psalm thus opens with an abrupt question characteristic of true lyric poetry. Horace gives us examples of a similar style, while gazing on spectacles of civil strife. Its opening word is expressive of astonishment and indignation at the wickedness and folly of those who oppose Jehovah. The scene, as it is presented to us in the first verse, is in the distance. We behold the warring peoples, and we hear the rumbling sound of their wrath, as the noise of the roaring sea. As these rebels first appear to us, nothing more than a confused condition is presented. The "Why" in this verse implies that it is impos-

sible to give a rational solution to the insensate opposition which these warring peoples are making to Jehovah and his Anointed. There is indignant astonishment in the question.

It would be difficult to overstate the impressiveness of this first part of this first scene. It is evident that irrationality could not go further than it has gone, in the opposition which these nations are making against Jehovah. Why are these nations in rebellion? Why do they attempt to throw off the yoke of the true king? Is he a tyrant against whom they are rebelling? Not so. They are insurgents against Jehovah in the person of him whom Jehovah has enthroned. The word rage is in Hebrew *ragash;* it is expressive of violent commotion. It is not found elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures, although there is a corresponding Chaldee word found in Daniel. The word with which this is rendered in Greek, Acts 4:25, denotes restiveness, as of horses that neigh, prance, and rush into battle But the raging of the nations, notwithstanding their deliberate determination, is vanity itself. No opposition to God, by whomsoever exercised, can prosper. In Acts 4:27, 28, we have the words, "For of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel foreordained to come to pass." In these words, we have a striking illustra-

tion of the truth taught in the description of the tumultuous rulers. These rebels against God desired to rid themselves of all restraint. Their wicked undertaking is groundless and reasonless. They supposed they could burst the bands of Omnipotence, as if they were ropes of sand. Many monarchs since that day have imitated their example, only to learn the utter folly of all forms of opposition against the Almighty.

In the second verse, we are brought nearer to these raging nations, or they are brought nearer to us. The confused scene presented in the first verse, now becomes much more distinct. We discover, in this verse, that the rebels against God are kings and rulers of the earth. We discover also that they have determinedly set themselves in opposition to the Almighty. They are not acting thoughtlessly, but deliberately; they are consulting together in order to make their opposition to the Almighty the more effective. This fact adds greatly to the force of the entire scene. We discover also, in this nearer view, the object of their insensate wrath; it is against Jehovah and his Anointed.

In the third verse, we are brought still closer to these tumultuous and rebellious nations. We are now able to distinguish their words as they express their determination to break the bands of the Almighty, and to cast away his cords. We thus overhear their consultations. The word translated cords really means twisted ropes, and it is a

stronger term than the one translated bands. The verb here employed means more than the mere act of breaking; it suggests the additional idea of contemptuous facility in flinging away the bonds of the Almighty; it is expressive of the utter scorn entertained by these rebellious nations for what they deemed the feeble forces of Jehovah. The figure comes from the effort of restive animals to throw off the yoke. The entire scene is as fully descriptive of many opponents of God in the world to-day, as it was an accurate presentation of enemies in the days of the psalmist or the Messiah.

The Deriding Jehovah—The Second Strophe, Verses 4-6.

The fourth verse begins the second strophe, or stanza, of the psalm. A scene of unparalleled sublimity is now presented. We have seen in the distance, and then nearer at hand, the tumultuous nations; we have heard the expression of their contemptuous resolution to burst the bonds, and to cast away the cords of the Almighty. Our minds have been filled with the reality, and at the same time, the vanity, the malice, and the futility of their opposition to the Omnipotent One. Now the curtain lifts. The scene presented fills us with holy awe, and with sublime conceptions of the dignity, majesty, and glory of the great God. He is seen seated in the heavens far above and beyond the malice of all his foes. On the everlasting throne sits the

almighty King, in whose sight nations and kings are but a drop in the bucket. In unapproachable majesty and eternal glory he is enthroned above all his foes. On earth, all was noise, confusion, and malice; in the sublime abode of the Almighty, all is peace, majesty, power, glory, sublimity, and divinity.

It is very suggestive as we glance at the opening of this scene into the secret place of the majesty of the Most High, to discover that the Almighty is sitting. We thus behold the reposeful dignity of the Omnipotent One. Sometimes God is described as awaking, as bestirring himself; but while he is pouring out his contempt upon the rebellious princes and peoples, he does not take the trouble to rise. He knows how utterly irrational and futile is their opposition, and he remains sitting while he indulges in laughter, and subjects them to derision. The further description here given us of God is almost startling; he is described as laughing. Can God laugh? Does God laugh? Is it possible for us to retain our exalted conceptions of God as the high and holy One, and yet think of him as seated on his lofty throne, and laughing at the weakness and wickedness of men? We are told that Cato, in his conceptions of the dignity that ought to belong to Roman consuls, affirmed that laughter on their part was utterly unbecoming. But here laughter is attributed to the Majesty of Heaven. The very shock which this conception of God may give us, adds to

the unspeakable folly of men in their opposition to the Almighty. The follies of sinners furnish just sport to God's infinite wisdom and power. The attempts of the kingdom of Satan, which seem formidable to us, are simply despicable to God. Sin is insanity. Only fools say that there is no God. Atheism and insanity are closely akin.

Of course, we must understand that the poet describes God in a manner which we can understand, describes him according to the manner and conceptions of men. Pharaoh imagined that by drowning the Israelite male children, he could root out the Israelites from the kingdom. His folly was sufficient cause for laughter on the part of God. God does not need to smite his foes; he needs only to laugh at them, and they are overthrown. He smites while he smiles. The poor, puny efforts of Satan and his hosts do not create uneasiness or fear on the part of God. Their utter impotency excites his extreme derision. It surely is thus a vain thing to strive with the glorious Majesty of Heaven. Later, in the same verse, we are told that Jehovah shall have them in derision. Luther asks, "Who thought when Christ suffered, and the Jews triumphed, that God was laughing all the time?" This is a tremendously bold anthropomorphism, but beneath it there is hidden a profound truth; to all superior beings and, *par excellence,* to God, sin is not only extremely odious, but it is utterly absurd. It evokes contempt on the part of the highest be-

ings, alike for its impotency and its wickedness; it is supremely silly.

While we gaze upon this startling scene, representing God indulging in laughter and derision, we are permitted to hear him speak. His enemies spoke to one another against him; now he speaks unto them in his wrath. The laughter was but the prelude to active opposition to them on the part of the Almighty. They may not escape from his severe rebuke. His seeming indifference will not last forever; he will not always calmly and derisively observe their opposition, but he will at length utterly confound them with the breath of his lips. Luther, in his "Ein' Feste Burg," echoes the thought of the psalmist:

> And though this world, with demons filled,
> Should threaten to undo us,
> We will not fear, for God hath willed
> His truth to triumph through us.
> The Prince of darkness grim,
> We tremble not for him;
> His rage we can endure,
> For lo! his doom is sure:
> One little word shall fell him.

As we heard the words spoken by the rebels expressive of their opposition to the Almighty, we are now to hear the very words of the Almighty in his determination to oppose the decision of these rebels: "Yet," or better, "But have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." We have here the central

truth of the psalm. The pronoun "I" is emphasized in the Hebrew. These words are here invested with awful majesty and clothed with resistless power. They are God's answer to the defiance of his foes. It is as if the Almighty had said, "Go on with your opposition; defy my power as ye may; join hand to hand as you choose; utter your most defiant threats against me and mine Anointed; but *I*"—thus God shows the futility of all their plans. They had their plans, and God had his plans. Really, the work of setting his King upon Zion's hill has already been accomplished. This statement is sublime beyond expression. While his enemies are proposing, he has already disposed the entire matter. They fret and rave in vain, because his will is supreme. Mr. Spurgeon finely says, "God's Anointed is appointed, and shall not be disappointed." All through the ages of history, this truth has found its illustration. Jesus as the Messiah, evermore sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied. He reigns to-day on the throne of the universe. In his pierced hand is the scepter of unlimited power. Our glad lips chant the praises of the Prince of Peace. Glorious things are spoken of our King! Sublime as have been his triumphs in the past, sublimer triumphs await him in the near future.

How dreadful have been the persecutions of pagan and papal Rome! But all the rage of men was impotence itself; it was as if a man should at-

tempt to snatch the sun from the firmament, or as if an infant attempted to stay the whirlwind. The moon shall not cease to move forward in the heavens in queenly majesty, even though the dogs bark at its brightness. The mountains shall melt in God's presence, and the sea before him shall flee. Sinners will be speechless in the presence of the Almighty. Who can stay the hand of Jehovah? He has placed the King on the holy hill of Zion. Whatever opposition men may make, it is bsolutely certain that the Anointed One will be King in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that to him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Messiah Declaring the Decree—The Third Strophe, Verses 7-9.

We now come to the third stanza, strophe, or act in this sublime and divine drama. We have looked upon the warring nations; we have also gazed upon the exalted throne of the Almighty; we have observed his derision, and we have heard his divine declaration regarding the placing of his King on the holy hill of Zion. We now behold the Anointed One, as he declares his rights of unlimited authority over the rebels against his throne and person. The Messiah himself now speaks. To him we had full and sublime reference in the earlier parts of the psalm. Now he appears in his grandeur and glory, declaring the purpose formed in the counsels of

eternity regarding himself. The first stanza closed with the words of the insurgents, the second with the words of the Lord, and the third gives us the language of the King already introduced. Nothing could be more dramatic than the introduction of the Messiah as the speaker in this third act. The Son, the Anointed King, now proclaims the Father's counsel concerning himself. There is not the slightest doubt that the pronoun "I" here refers to the Messiah. It is as if the Messiah, looking into the angry faces of the rebellious vassals, hurls his declaration, "I will declare the decree." We cannot help discovering that there is a striking proof of the divinity of the Messiah in the words, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." We are not told when nor where Jehovah made this declaration to the Messiah; but it certainly was made before the outbreak of these rebels. Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power in his resurrection. Christ's resurrection day was his coronation day. Then it was manifested, in a distinct and peculiar sense, that he was the Son of God with power. The filiation of Christ is an inexplicable mystery; it is not necessary here even to attempt an explanation. Most striking is the affirmation here: "the heathen for thine inheritance." It is thus declared that these very rebels are a part of his possession. They are, at this moment, in his power, and are yet to become subject to his authority. The Messiah will be a destroyer to those

who refuse to accept his sway. In one of his own parables, we have the words, " Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay before me." God does not delight in the death of the sinner; but neither does God's mercy destroy God's justice. His mercy, if refused, makes his justice the more certain and terrible. In the First psalm, the ungodly are driven away like chaff; but in the Second, they are dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel. Who can withstand the just wrath of the Almighty? Who can make headway against him?

The Anointed One will have possession of the uttermost parts of the earth; the most distant regions of the world will own his sway. The progress of events to-day is rapidly fulfilling this prophecy. All the discoveries of modern science are in harmony with these ancient predictions. Railways, steamships, and telegraphs are the servants of the Almighty. Electricity is the swift angel of Jehovah. Wireless telegraphy is the agent of the Almighty. Modern science has made the world a whispering gallery, and God is making it vocal with his praise and radiant with his glory. The " Cape-to-Cairo " railway will obliterate many traces of the " Dark Continent "; soon there will be no dark continent on the globe. A new era has dawned upon the nations of the earth. God is making the wrath of man to praise him, and the genius of man to declare his glory.

The Psalmist Exhorting the Rebels—The Fourth Strophe, Verses 10-12.

The original dramatic structure of the psalm is still retained, and the language of this portion is doubtless that of the psalmist. He here exhorts, warns, and entreats the rulers and princes, who have already been presented to us as engaged in opposition to Jehovah and his Anointed, to submit and to be saved. In these words, there is a sudden change of manner and an abrupt transition to the tone of earnest admonition. This exhortation is clearly addressed to the characters presented to us in the very first scene of this drama, and to kings and to all others in general. We cannot but observe that the destroying power of the Messiah, which is mentioned in the preceding verses, he possesses to help rather than to hurt the children of men. That element in his character is simply introductory to the tenderer elements of his providence and government. This is a very sweet thought in this entire connection. The Messiah possesses power in order that he may win men to his service, and that thus they may escape his wrath. Kings and judges are here the subjects of exhortation.

Fear is to be mingled with true service of Jehovah, and trembling with rejoicing in that service. It thus comes to pass that the poem closes with an exhortation to kiss the Son, lest he be angry and the people perish. Kissing was an ancient mode of

doing homage or giving allegiance to a king. We know that even now in European courts kissing the hand, or a portion of the robe, is indicative of deference paid to authority. In the psalm, there may be an allusion to the kiss as a religious act among the heathen. It is interesting to observe the beautiful beatitude with which the psalm closes, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." No words of tongue or pen are more exactly true than these. Kings, princes, and peoples, men of every century and every country, men of every color, rank, and condition, are truly blessed when they put their trust in the Lord God, and serve him with all their hearts. All men need him as Friend and Saviour; all who thus trust him are safe in time and in eternity. This is the great truth which is taught everywhere in the Bible; and one of the chief duties of the pulpit is to induce the children of men, in their weakness and wickedness, to put their trust in the Son of God as Saviour and Lord.

The exhortation of the psalmist will never cease to be appropriate so long as kings and judges among men are rebellious toward God. Had the rulers in Christ's day listened to this exhortation, Jerusalem had not been destroyed, and the Jews trampled under the feet of Roman power. Had Julian the Apostate listened to this exhortation, he had not died, according to the tradition, exclaiming, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!" Had the authorities of the kingdom of Spain and of the Church of Rome

listened to this exhortation, the Inquisition had not been erected in Spain, nor planted at awful cost of blood in the Netherlands. Hadst thou listened, O Tomas de Torquemada, thou hadst not been the inquisitor-general of the Inquisition, and hadst not received thy immortality of scorn and condemnation. Had Charles V obeyed this exhortation, he would not have attempted to erect an empire on the grave of liberty. Had he listened, he would not have charged his son, the pitiless Philip II, on the twenty-fifth of October, 1555, in the historic hall of the palace in Brussels, the gay capital of Brabant, when he abdicated his throne and gave to his son one-half the world, to establish the "Holy Inquisition," saying to him, "So shall you have my blessing, and the Lord shall prosper all your undertakings." Had Charles IX of France obeyed the injunction of the psalmist, he had not, with his satanic mother, Catherine de Medici, permitted the massacre of Saint Bartholomew; and so he had not suffered the awful agonies which drove the blood through the pores of his skin as he was in the hour and article of death.

Be wise now, O Czar of Russia, and not arouse the spirit of bloody revolution in thy vast empire. It is possible for thee to win an immortal name among the great liberators of history; and so to take thy place by the side of Alexander II, the czar liberator of Russia. Be wise now, O brutal King of the Belgians, and not longer stain hand and

soul with the blood of mutilated and slaughtered Africans in the valley of the Congo. Be wise now, O Pope of Rome, come out of the sixteenth century into the twentieth, and do not attempt to trample the liberties of France into the dust of the crumbling barriers and the awful cruelties of the Middle Ages. Thy throne is even now tottering toward its enfeeblement, if not its utter overthrow. A new day has dawned on all the nations of the earth. Central and South America are feeling the throb of the spirit of liberty which marks the opening of the twentieth century. The power of superstition, ignorance, tyranny, and bigotry, which have marked the domination of the Roman Church in all these countries, is giving way to the light and liberty of our modern life. Even nations long in the bondage of Roman superstition and bigotry now stand on tiptoe, with the blended light of modern civilization and a reformed Christianity falling on their upturned faces.

Be wise now, O ye leaders of heathenism, in all its forms. Know that the spirit of Christianity is pervading the philosophy, the literature, and even the religion of all the nations that long have sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. Do ye not hear Japan's "Banzai" that is echoing over China, Siam, and Korea? Do ye not see, above the banners of every nation, the light raying out from the cross of the Lord's Anointed? Can ye not hear Hawaii's "Aloha" echoing across the Pacific to

Japan, China, Ceylon, and India? Do ye not hear India's " Salaam " blending with Hawaii's " Aloha," and thus rolling across continent and ocean to Great Britain, thence over the Atlantic to America, and so back to Hawaii? Thus the song of peace and love encircles the globe; thus the benediction which fell upon the plains of Bethlehem, the night the Christ was born, falls upon all the nations of the earth where the glorious gospel is proclaimed.

There are now no hermit nations. Christianity rules the world. It is the hope of the future. All nations must bow to Jesus Christ. Our nobler civilization is the fruit of his Passion; and this civilization is, in turn, the inspiration to nobler endeavors in the years to come. The Eastern sky is radiant with the crimson and gold of a brighter day than has ever yet dawned for the nations of the earth. More will be achieved in missions at home and abroad during the first quarter of the twentieth century than during all of the nineteenth century. We can say, with the eloquent J. M. Mason: " The days roll rapidly on, when the shout of the isles shall swell the thunder of the continent; when the Thames and the Danube, when the Tiber and the Rhine shall call upon the Euphrates, the Ganges, and the Nile; and the loud concert shall be joined by the Hudson, the Mississippi, and the Amazon, singing with one heart and one voice, 'Alleluiah! Salvation! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!' "

III

THE PROMISEFUL PRESENCE

Text: And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.—Gen. 17 : 1, 2.

WE are all familiar with the fact that God spoke in divers ways to holy men of old. God is a sovereign, unlimited in power, and infinite in wisdom. He adopts different methods of communication with man, according to the differing circumstances in each case. In the case before us this morning, God, so far as we are able to discover, employed no intervening instrumentality in his communication with Abram. He spoke directly to the father of the faithful. The glow of divinity is on the text of this morning. Out from this narrative the rays of God's glory shine; and the voice of the Almighty is clearly heard in this text. Mr. Spurgeon finely calls this class of texts the "Kohinoors" of the Bible. Kohinoors, or "mountains of light," indeed, are the texts which bring God so audibly before men.

God still talks to his children in sweetest confidence. He still joins with them in holiest fellow-

ship. To him who overcomes finally will be given a white stone, and in that stone a new name is written, a name known only to the divine Giver, and to the human receiver. It is a holy secret between God and one of his children. If you and the person next you know facts known to you and to no others, there is a sacred friendship between you; there is a strong bond binding you together. This is the very thought of the new name in the white stone given at last to those who overcome. God manifests such conditions of friendship, even here and now. Can God see? Can God hear? Who can doubt that he both sees and hears? The day is coming when it will be seen that prayer and communion with God are as much in harmony with natural law as the long distance telephone, or as is wireless telegraphy. The laws of the natural world are as truly divine as are the laws of the spiritual world. That miserable, medieval, monkish notion that the world was hopelessly bad, fortunately has largely disappeared from Christian literature and daily life. The book of creation is God's unwritten bible, as Holy Scripture is God's written Bible. Both are God's Bibles; both reveal God's thought and declare God's love.

The Divine Presence.

Coming still more closely to the text we discover, in the first place, that we have here God's *Presence* —"And when Abram was ninety years old and

nine, the Lord appeared to Abram." God's presence was most timely. He came to Abram in a merciful manifestation. Abram for thirteen years, so far as we can discover, received no extraordinary communication from God. Abram was now ninety-nine years old; and thirteen years had passed since the birth of Ishmael—thirteen years of great humiliation on the part of Sarah, and thirteen years of painful waiting on the part of Abram. These thirteen years were, as I have suggested, years of silence on the part of God. Once Abram had listened to God's promise, and his faith had not staggered; but afterward his faith did stagger. He endeavored to help God fulfil his promise. Polygamy was tolerated in the Old Testament dispensation, because of the hardness of men's hearts; but it was never sanctioned by God. Through all these years the divine voice was silent, and Abram's heart was sad. Now God comes in mercy to renew his intimacy with Abram. Abram sinned and he must suffer; and he did suffer. We also are sometimes tempted to resort to doubtful means to help God fulfil his promise; we are tempted to wink at wrong in political life, if the wrong is in the interest of our party; we look leniently on wrong in business life, when that wrong is for our financial gain. We thus are all exposed to temptation along these lines, in business life, in political ambitions, and in our family relations. We need the rebuke which came to Abram; we need exhortations to loyalty and to

love. We cannot forget that the best men are, at the best, only men. We cannot forget that Homer may nod; we cannot forget that the sun has spots. We cannot forget that even the father of the faithful appeared faithless. Men often fail where they are supposed to be strongest; they often fail not at their weakest points, but at those which are supposed to be strongest. We may, however, be comforted by the fact that the man who never makes a mistake is a man who is not likely ever to make anything.

You will notice also that God's presence was a personal presence. The Almighty addressed Abram, using the first personal pronoun. It is a wonderful thing that, in God's word, we have God speaking and using that pronoun. Here through the clouds he has come; here, without any intermediate representative, God directly and personally speaks. It is certain that God can make, and that he often has made, some visible manifestation of himself. Doubtless, Christ often appeared in temporary incarnations before his prolonged incarnation in the likeness of man during his earthly life. As you study the Old Testament, you will discover, without doubt, frequent appearances of God, as we have reason to believe, in the person of Jesus Christ. Thus he appeared to Abram; thus he appeared to Moses; thus he appeared to Joshua; and at other times also along the line of Old Testament history, God made appearances, epiphanies, theophanies, in

temporary incarnations of Christ, before the prolonged incarnation following the birth in Bethlehem. We all readily recognize that God is not obliged to follow any prescribed method of appearance or of revelation.

This was also a most comforting appearance of God. God revealed himself, on this occasion, by an august title; the form in which that title appears, in our version, is the Almighty God. The Hebrew title is El Shaddai. This title of God is found six times in Genesis; it is found thirty-one times in the book of Job. This name is a revelation of sublime facts in God's nature. Wrong conceptions of God are largely responsible for human sin. A wrong conception of God was responsible for Abram's sin on this occasion. If Abram had remembered that God is able to fulfil all his promises, he would not have been guilty of attempting to assist God in that respect. Had he remembered that truth, he had not sinned. El Shaddai means the All-Sufficient One. El means the Strong, the Lasting, the Absolute One. It comes from a root meaning to twist, as you twist a cable, and it thus suggests the strong God. Shaddai means the Unchangeable, the Irresistible One; the One "who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever"; the One in whom "there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Putting the two names together, therefore, we have the Strong and Unchangeable God. Oh! what a glorious name this is, by which God made him-

self known to Abram! In him all power resides. Elohim is the God who creates nature, and so in the earlier accounts of God's creative power, we have that name. The word is in the plural, and usually with a verb in the singular. Elohim creates and preserves nature. El Shaddai is the God who controls nature, who subdues nature, who makes nature ministrant to spiritual and divine purposes. Every new name of God is a new revelation of God's character. The study of the names of God is wonderfully interesting and instructive. Each name is an unfoldment of glorious and divine elements and facts which are contained in God's character.

It is interesting also to observe that this was one of the world-wide titles of God. Thus it was known to Balaam; and thus it is found in the Book of Job. God is not mastered by his creation; the Almighty cannot be subordinate to his own handiwork. Nature discloses much of God's power and God's goodness; but nature cannot reveal God in his infinite fulness. We joyfully recognize the part nature performs as a revelation of God. We stand with uncovered head beside the psalmist when he states: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." But the heavens cannot reveal all of God. Nature may show me God's hand; the Bible shows me God's heart. Nature may reveal God as

Creator and Preserver; the Bible reveals God as Father and Redeemer. Thus God comes in the text in this new name and with a new unfoldment of his own great and glorious character. This name teaches us that back of God's promise is God's puissance. Potency must supplement promise; power to do must be associated with power to say; God thus made known to Abram, the father of the faithful, his fuller character in this diviner name. Abram greatly needed this encouragement at this moment; his faith had staggered. Let him now know that God's power is back of God's promises; that nothing is impossible with God; that nothing is too hard for God; that God is the vivifier even of the dead—then he can fully trust and patiently wait.

We cannot but be impressed by the timeliness of God's appearance. When the tale of bricks was doubled, then came Moses. When the knell of liberty was sounded, then the deliverer was born. When civil and religious liberty had well-nigh perished from the earth, then came the Protestant Reformation. When the colonies groaned under the arbitrary authority of George III and Lord North, then came Washington and the Declaration of Independence. When slavery had cast its dark shadow over our fair land, then came America's mightiest son, Abraham Lincoln, with his Emancipation Proclamation. Evermore man's extremity is God's opportunity; evermore the hour that is darkest ushers in the dawn with its highest hope. Evermore the

star of morning rises soon after the hour of deepest midnight. God's presence is timely! O trust him! O believe in him! O wait upon the Lord, and he will renew thy strength!

The Divine Precept.

I beg you to notice also the divine *Precept* in this text—"Walk before me, and be thou perfect." The literal translation is, "Set thyself to walk." Religion is intensely practical. Abram had erred. To him suggestively God administers rebuke. It is as if God said, "Unpleasant duties must frequently be performed, but walk thou on loyally, prayerfully, manfully, pursuing the even tenor of thy way." We are all in need of just such an admonition as this. The true believer, like the heavenly bodies, is constant and unfailing in his acts of obedience to God. Taking a few steps is not walking with God. Enoch walked with God; he thus took more than a few steps. He kept right on taking steps. You are not a walker with God, if you are only a stepper for a little while. A man is not wholly bad, if even now and then an action of his is bad; neither is a man really good, if even now and then an act of his is good. Cain offered sacrifice; but Cain was bad. Peter denied; but Peter was on the whole good, although he took a step now and then away from God. See yonder river flowing! But observe that in this eddy the water is flowing in the opposite direction. Watch the eddy; soon the water flows

onward. The life of the good man is a current flowing toward God. There may be, for a little time, an eddy in his life, but the eddy is not the stream; it is only an eddy which will soon join the stream. We are to judge men by the trend of their lives.

Religion must also be sincere—"be thou perfect." Be patient; walk on. Trust God's truth; trust God's love. Does this mean that a man may become absolutely perfect? I do not so affirm, but I do affirm that it is possible for all of us to stand on a vastly higher plane than that on which we now stand. It is possible for us to be much more like God than any of us are now like God. God cannot place before us any other than a perfect standard. Let your life be planned according to the perfect rule; any other injunction from God would be unbecoming in God. This precept implies the possession of the necessary strength. All God's commands, it has been well said, are God's enablements. With God on our side, we are irresistible. God's rule of arithmetic is simply wonderful; there is no rule in earthly mathematics like that of heavenly arithmetic. According to the heavenly rule, while one can chase one thousand, two can put ten thousand to flight. God never will forsake a brave man who is doing his duty under the impulse of a high motive. The true soldier of God is never beaten. John the Baptist and Jesus Christ were the subjects of bitter hatred, and the victims

of foulest murder; but they rose from their graves to live immortal lives. Savonarola was hanged, May 23, 1498, and two other Dominicans with him, and their bodies were burned. But Savonarola rose to reach out his hand across the years to Martin Luther, to cheer him on to trial and to triumph. This is God's law forevermore. To-day men are caricatured; to-morrow, if they be thoroughly worthy men, they will be glorified. The men of worth who are cannonaded to-day, will be canonized to-morrow. The man who strikes at evil is the man at whom evil will strike. If he be genuinely good, let evil strike at him; but, in the end, it will be evil that will be struck. The heroes of the centuries are the men who dared to do and to die for God. Their memory is immortal; their glory will shine with increasing brightness. "The memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot."

The Divine Promise.

Your attention, in the last place, is called to the *gracious Promise* in the text. We have had the divine presence and the divine precept; and now look, for a little time, at the divine promise—"And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." This is to us a most gracious and comforting promise. This is the fifth time that the promise was given, that Abram should be the father of an innumerable host.

Abram means high father; this name is now changed to Abraham, meaning high or eminent, father of a multitude. Sarai's name also was changed. Sarai, some say, means "contentious"; the better interpretation makes it mean "my princess"; but the restriction implied in the possessive "my" is now removed. Her position is greatly enlarged; she becomes Sarah, princess. She is now to be the princess of a multitude. God changed the name of Jacob—supplanter, tripper-up, heel-catcher—to Israel, prince with God, victor through God. What a wonderful change, when Jacob loses his old name and character, and becomes Israel! Simon becomes Peter. Simon, the hearer, becomes Peter, the rock. Superb name! In like manner Saul becomes Paul.

So God gives to us now great and precious promises. This ancient promise is ever expanding. It has its significant relation to us to-day. It is full of inspiration and hope. It is finding its fulfilment in many lands. Every idol shall fall. The islands of the seas are turning to God. Idols are gone, or going, in Japan; and the truth of this promise is covering the hills and valleys of Japan with light and joy and peace. Even China, before many years shall pass, will be marching with the foremost nations of the earth, to the music of modern civilization and to the religion of Jesus Christ. This promise has found its fulfilment in India, and already some of its heathen temples are the abodes

of bats and snakes; and the name of Christ is now echoing over the hills of India and the towering peaks of the glorious Himalayas. Glory be to God, the true seed of Abraham will one day fill the whole earth!

IV

THE SHINING FACE

Text: And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.—Exod. 34 : 29.

VERY wonderful indeed was the interview of Moses with God on the mount during the period of forty days and forty nights. Moses was there in intimate communion with God; and during this entire period he did neither eat nor drink. He was thus taught, by a strange and blessed experience, that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Perhaps his communion with God was such that he neither required nor desired the bread which perisheth. There are many difficult questions which can readily be asked regarding the nature of this communion with God, and the method of life which Moses lived while that communion continued. But we may be quite sure that God, who sought this communion, answered in the practical experience of Moses all those questions that seem to us so difficult. Moses could readily be sustained without the ordinary use of the means necessary for our sus-

tenance. Moses had meat to eat of which the world knew nothing. Moses lived on food that was divine, and that food was the immediate gift of God with whom he held sweet communion. His soul must have been filled with the visions of the Almighty, so filled that the ordinary requirements of the body were for the time entirely forgotten. Not with meat and drink, but with his light, his law, his love, his peace, and his joy did God fill the body and soul of his distinguished servant. This period of forty days was afterward signalized both in the lives of Elijah and of Christ.

The Shining Face.

In developing the thoughts of this text, I call your attention, in the first place, to the *Shining* of the face of Moses. Moses carried with him from God the two tables of the testimony written by the finger of God; but he also carried back to the people the best kind of personal adornment, a shining face. No man is ever so beautifully adorned as the man whose face glows with the light of God. Aaron and the people, as you remember, sinned strangely and grievously during the absence of Moses on a former occasion; and when he came down from the mount at that time there was fittingly a frown upon his face. Now instead of a frown, there is on his face the glory of God. On that former occasion, the unwelcome noise of the revelry of the people grated harshly upon the ear and the soul of

Moses, who had just been in sweet communion with God. Then it was becoming that he should descend as a leader and commander of the people, to chastise them for their idolatry. But now he comes with messages of mercy, and with the facial glow of a mediator who has been admitted into the immediate presence of God. On that earlier occasion, he came back to the people with the rod of a magistrate; on this occasion, he comes with the shining face of a messenger of peace and of love. His shining face was a mark of the divine favor to himself. The people, in this way, were to know that he had been with God and had been accepted by God. They would not, therefore, be likely again ever to question his divine authority, because of their present knowledge of the communion with God he had just enjoyed. He thus carried, as has been suggestively said, his divine credentials in the shining of his face. Thus it was done to the man whom the King of kings delighted to honor.

The face often is the man. The soul looks out through the eyes; the heart often voices itself by the lips. A shining face is suggestive of a peaceful spirit, and a musical voice of a properly attuned soul. It thus comes to pass, that when men have lived with God, they carry the very glory of God in their faces. It is quite probable that Moses long retained, perhaps he always retained, in his face the reflection of the glory of God's presence. It would not be surprising, if ever after that moment,

until his mysterious death, Moses was a different man in face and in spirit from what he had ever been before. This interview may have contributed to the vigor of his old age. There are marvelously mysterious laws of life; we have not yet mastered them in their full meaning. There is a broad margin of mystery lying between the known and the unknown, between life and death, and between sickness and health. We occasionally make incursions into that margin of territory, and we often carry back therefrom some new knowledge; but in the years to come, parents, physicians, and clergymen will have vastly enlarged spheres of knowledge, knowledge of which now we only dream in our loftiest moments. It would not at all surprise me if, somehow, God gave Moses new physical vigor, new mental celerity, and new spiritual exaltation from that moment. There are times when we are just as distinctly conscious that God pours physical vigor into us as we are that we are alive, times when we lay our souls open to God and say, "O God, fill us with physical power, mental astuteness, and spiritual apprehension!" If such experiences be possible to us now, what might have been possible to Moses when he was in the holy mount with God? The eye that had seen God would not grow dim; the ear that had heard God's voice would not become heavy with old age; the natural strength which was increased by this communion with God would not soon abate; and the face would not read-

ily become wrinkled which had shone with the resplendence of God's uplifted countenance. Am I exaggerating? Am I overstating the truth? Rather, is it not the fact that I am understating the truth? We live too far away from God, and the result is that we fail to receive from God copious supplies in physical vigor, in mental force, and in spiritual power and joy.

The Cause of the Shining Face.

Perhaps we are now prepared to advance a step, and to ask and to answer the question, "What was the *Cause* of the shining of the face of Moses?" The shining of the face was, doubtless, due to his sight of the glorious God. It would seem that on this occasion, he saw more of the glory of God than when he was in the mount on the former occasion. Having now beheld the glory of God with open face, he was, in some measure, changed into the same image from glory to glory. Communion with God causes the face to shine; living with God gives luster to a man's countenance. Living with the devil makes a man's face satanic. The mouth, the nostrils, every part of the man's face will thus soon possess marks of degradation. Cherishing vile thoughts, the face will become vile; but living with exalted affections, the face becomes ennobled. The glory of the ever-blessed God possessed, in largest measure possible, will change a man's life in every particular. In comparison with the facial bright-

ness ordinarily possessed by Moses, that which he had now was inexpressibly lustrous and glorious. Christ's radiance, however, was the glory that excelleth. Not only did his face shine as the sun, but on one occasion, his whole presence was radiant; his raiment was white and glistering; it flashed forth light; it was more resplendent than any fuller could whiten it; it was whiter than the glistening snow on Mount Hermon. The glory of Christ was, for the most part, hidden; but on that one occasion, it rayed out until his very garments were radiant with undimmed splendor.

We also read that the face of Stephen was like the face of an angel. We have all seen men and women whose faces were like the faces of angels. There is in mind now a woman who had recently come out of a baptism of terrible sorrow; she sat in her pew looking up into my face, and I emphatically affirm that the very glory of God was in her face on that Sunday morning. There is still in the Christian life the beauty of holiness. It is still quite possible for us so to live that men shall take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. When men obey Christ, they receive his peace into their hearts, and the glory of his radiant life comes into their faces. Again and again have I seen faces shine, as did the face of Stephen, when men and women came up out of the baptismal waters. Often the glory of God in supernal splendor has come down upon these baptismal waters. The faces of young

converts have often been radiant; they have shone like the faces of angels. Mysterious joy often comes into the hearts of God's people, and the glory of the Lord then shines in their faces. Joy in the Lord is not simply a privilege; it is a duty. Cheerfulness promotes physical health and dispenses spiritual blessing. Christian joy will make a homely face beautiful, and a beautiful face transcendently charming. A rugged and seamed face, if illumined with the glory of God, is a sight to charm the soul of an artist, and to inspire with joy the heart of an angel. God can drive gloom from the soul and illumine the face with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. White, and not black, is the color of heaven. God loves joy and not gloom. The gloomy Christian misrepresents his heavenly Father; he practically says that God is a hard master. A long face on a Christian man is truly a false face. Do not tell me that men of the world are joyous. They never know genuine joy, such as they might know if they were men of God. They call a life of sin a life of pleasure. It is a life of slavery. He who serves the devil serves a hard master. If you are to sup with the devil, you certainly need a long spoon; and however long your spoon, you will eventually pay the penalty of making the devil your friend. There is a great difference between joy and happiness. Happiness is just what haps; but joy is not external, it is internal. Joy is not dependent upon what happens; joy springs up from within the soul.

It is independent of external conditions and environments; it is a well of water springing up within the heart unto everlasting life. There is also a great difference between the joy of a saint and the joy of a sinner. The joy of a sinner has been compared to lightning; the joy of a saint is comparable to light. Light is soft, sweet, wholesome, peaceful, healthful; lightning is blighting, scorching, blasting.

Living with Christ, we catch his spirit. No law is more general than that association produces assimilation. A man comes to be like his wife when they have lived together for many years; it would be much better for a good many men if they were more like their wives. It is a solemn truth that association produces assimilation. A musician ought not to hear discordant sounds. A painter ought not to gaze long on painful sights. Music ought to minister to harmony, to concord, to beauty. Painting ought to minister to the beautiful, the pure, the celestial. We ought not often to see bad pictures; we ought not to study the pictures of "Von Daub." Our souls need harmony, health, good, God. God is health, God is peace, God is love. He is the God of the beautiful. Look at the flowers on this table. Did art ever make a rose like this one? What are flowers? They are God's beautiful thoughts. Am I a student of botany? Then I am a student of God's handiwork, of God's exquisite sense of odors, of God's graceful touch, and of God's gentle thoughts translated into beautiful flowers.

We must live with Christ if we would gain his image. Do you live with Christ? Have you time for daily communion with Christ? Do you know what it is, sometimes at least, to be alone with God —perhaps it is on an elevated train, perhaps it is in a crowded surface car—but somewhere alone with God? A few minutes in the day with God will change the whole day; it will soften the spirit; it will sweeten the life; it will beautify the home; it will make your heart joyous and your face radiant.

Moses Ignorant of the Radiance.

Will you allow me to advance a step farther, while I remind you that Moses did not know that his face was shining? This is the very charm of his shining face. This is one of the sweetest thoughts in this entire discussion. Others saw the shining; but he did not know it. The truth was attested by Aaron and by the children of Israel generally. They were dazzled and awed by what they saw. Goodness always commands respect. The value of a man's testimony in court depends upon the man's life out of court. The force of a lawyer's plea depends largely upon the lawyer's life. The influence of a physician in a sick room depends somewhat upon the spirit and life of that physician outside the sick room. A low, vulgar, sensual physician has no right to go into a sick room to treat a delicate child or a pure woman. He ought rather to abhor himself. One reason why certain spiritual

forms of treatment of disease have come into vogue is because some doctors forget that their patients have spiritual natures.

Moses, in his modesty and humility, put a veil upon his face. He accommodated himself to the capacity of the people to bear the token of God's nearness. He then went into the tabernacle before the Lord and put off his veil. Every form of concealment is necessarily thrown aside when men present themselves before God. How beautiful was the unconsciousness of Moses! We never know the power that goes out from us; often unconscious power is the highest form of power. A lady said to me, the other day, of a clergyman who used to live in this city, that whenever she saw him on the opposite side of the street, she crossed over that she might meet him. She said, "There is a benediction in his presence"; she thus illustrated what is said in Scripture about the people being healed by the shadow of the Apostle Peter. The beauty of the Lord our God is upon many Christian men and women, and they are thinking only of their own unworthiness. Their faces and lives shine with the indwelling of Christ in their souls; but they see not the radiancy of glory which all others see in their lives and faces. Their unconsciousness is one of the best evidences of their possession of divine grace in its fullest measure. The moment a man thinks he is perfect, that moment he ceases to be perfect. The moment a man begins to think of himself un-

duly, that moment he begins to think of God unjustly. The man who lives in an unduly introspective spirit, always studying himself, has ceased rightly and objectively to study God. When we forget self, God is remembering us aright, and we are remembering God aright. I have the profoundest contempt for the monks who, to save their little, shriveled souls, went off into caves, or dens, or lived on the top of pillars; poor, ignorant, selfish souls! The man who forgets himself and goes out to help his fellow-men, and thus to serve his God, is saving his soul after God's fashion. Lowliness in feeling is evidence of loftiness in attainment.

While a man is struggling toward perfection, he is growing in grace; but when he thinks he has attained perfection, he has begun to go downward rather than upward, and backward rather than forward. Ours is an upward calling, and when we cease to advance, we begin to retrograde. The Apostle Paul affirmed that he had not yet attained, and was not yet perfect. Most charming is it to see how unconscious was Moses and how unconscious was the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul when converted declared himself unworthy to be called an apostle. As the time passed, and he grew in grace and in knowledge, he said, about the year 64, that he was the least of all saints; and just before his martyrdom, when he reached a still loftier stature in Christ Jesus, perhaps in the year 66 or 67, he said, "I am the chief of sinners." He

never was so near heaven as when he said he was the chief of sinners. How beautiful was the humility of John the Baptist! He never forgot his inferiority to Jesus the Christ. He virtually said, "I am only a voice. I am nothing but one crying in the wilderness." He said, "I am not worthy, stooping down, to unloose the shoes' latchet of Jesus Christ." But what did Jesus Christ say of him? "Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist"; this is the proudest eulogy that was ever pronounced upon a human being in the history of the race. John blessedly showed his humility when he said of Christ, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

In Prov. 15 : 33 we read, "Before honor is humility." On one of the colleges in Cambridge this thought is beautifully expressed. There are three gateways; the first is called "Humilitatis," the gate of humility; the second is "Virtutis," the gate of virtue; the third is "Honoris," the gate of honor. This is the order of the Christian life. Begin to-day by accepting Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Then go forward in his blessed service.

If you can do nothing else for God, you can carry a shining face. Charles Kingsley finely said, "If you wish your neighbors to see what God is like, let them see what he can make you like." May we hear the words of the Master, "Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

V

THE WORTHIEST RESOLUTION

Text: . . . But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.—Josh. 24 : 15.

THESE are noble words uttered by a noble man on a great occasion. Significant and beautiful as the words are in themselves, they become vastly more significant and beautiful when the occasion on which they were uttered is considered, and the character of the speaker is rightly appreciated. There are fewer nobler men than Joshua found in the records of the Bible; and there are few sublimer occasions than the great assembly of the children of Israel at which the words of this text were spoken. We may profitably study this resolution of the noble speaker on this great occasion; its characteristics are well worthy of hearty commendation and of constant imitation, on the part of men and women, in every age and country.

Three considerations add greatly to the significance of this text. The first consideration is the *place* in which these words were uttered; this place was Shechem, a vicinity greatly significant in Bible history. It was here that Abraham, on his first migration to the land of promise, pitched his tent

and built an altar unto God. This transaction took place under the oak, or terebinth, of Moreh at Shechem. In Jacob's time, the oak under which Abraham worshiped still existed. The images which some of Jacob's family had brought from Padan-aram, were buried here under this oak. The sons of Jacob drove their flocks to Shechem, and in this vicinity Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites. This was one of the most beautiful spots in Palestine. We know that, as a rule, Palestine is not a beautiful country; this, however, is its very garden. It was a common Mohammedan tradition that Allah loved Syria beyond all lands, and the place he loved most is the mountain of Nablus. All travelers have been loud in their praise of the charms of nature in this neighborhood. The valley is protected by Gerizim on the south, and Ebal on the north. The feet of these mountains are not more than five hundred yards apart at the bottom of the valley. Here are heard the sounds of nightingales and other birds; here the watery particles which rise from many streams, pouring down the sides of the mountain, give the atmosphere its purple-colored hues. Every traveler is instantly conscious of the charms of nature in this historic valley.

The *occasion* also on which the text was spoken adds greatly to its importance. Joshua's long and useful life is nearing its close. He saw the people separating from the Lord their God. He now gathers up his waning energies, in an attempt to bind

the people to the service of the God of their fathers. His life-work was nearly over; he will make its evening sublimer than its noonday. He, therefore, assembled the people in this valley, so famous for its historic associations and for its natural attractions, and will strive to commit them anew to the service of God. Here his last counsels were spoken, here his last noble resolution was uttered. This place was made even more significant and sacred, because a greater than Joshua sat on Jacob's well and told the woman of Samaria of the water of life. Could any spot in any country claim historic associations so beautiful and sublime as those gathering about this valley and its vicinity?

Joshua's own *character*, as the speaker on this great occasion, gives additional value to his words. He was the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim. He began his life as a slave in the brick fields of Egypt. He was probably forty years of age when the great events of the exodus occurred. Moses soon saw that he possessed the qualities necessary in a great leader, and in the man who should become the successor of himself. He appears first in connection with the fight against Amalek at Rephidim. He accompanied Moses part of the way up Sinai, when Moses went the first time to receive the tables of testimony. He was one of the twelve chiefs sent to explore the land of Canaan, and one of the two who gave an encouraging report of the land they explored. He was one of the few sur-

vivors of the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. His life is given with fulness of detail, and yet no stain appears upon his character. His heroic achievements would have kindled the imagination of poets in the early Christian centuries, and still more fully in the age of chivalry. He was a devout warrior, fearless and heroic, and yet blameless in act, as he was simple in faith. He was as knightly and chivalrous as he was tender and generous. He was an Oliver Cromwell, a Henry Havelock, a "Stonewall" Jackson, and a General Howard in his union of religious faith with knightly chivalry and patriotic courage. By learning obedience as a youth, he knew how to exercise authority as a man. He died when one hundred and ten years old, and was buried in his own city of Timnath-serah. The man behind the words gives the words power. We always ask, "Who said it?" as truly as we ask, "What was said?" The "who" is as important as the "what" in such cases as this. The place, the occasion, and the speaker thus combine to give additional authority to the noble resolution which is the text of this discourse.

A Personal Resolution.

It is to be observed, in the first place, that this is a *Personal* resolution—"As for *me* and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua gave the people the opportunity to decide between the service of God and the worship of idols; he urged the people

to make their choice, as did Elijah on another memorable occasion, between the false worship and the true, between indulgence in their lower natures and the approval of their enlightened judgment and illumined conscience. He does not really give the people the option between the worship of God and the worship of idols; but after commanding them to serve God, he suggests that, if they reject God, they must choose between the various idols their fathers had worshiped, as the objects of their devotion. He then grandly affirms that as for himself, his choice is already made. He will not be tempted to turn away from God and to worship idols, whatever the people may decide to do on their own behalf. Already he had spent long years of his noble life in the service of Jehovah, and nothing whatever could now induce him to turn away from that service for the worship of idols of any nation or character. His words ring out with a most inspiring tone; they stir our hearts, warm our blood, and inspire our faith even to this hour. They are words which might be chosen by every father as his motto, governing his personal and family life. It is impossible to overestimate the influence that these words have had all through the ages in leading men to decide for God, and publicly to profess their faith on behalf of themselves and their families. Nothing more fully showed Joshua's fitness to be a leader of men than the decision which he here made, and which he so triumphantly proclaims.

He will not wait to discover what the majority of the people may approve, but he instantly, joyously, and irrevocably commits himself to the service of God with full purpose of heart. Many men wait to see in which direction the current of popular feeling may flow before they take a decided step for themselves. Joshua was not a man of that type. He dared to stand alone, so far as the people were concerned, if he might stand alone with God. Never does a man appear so manly as when he decides, whatever others may do, to serve God with every power of brain and heart which God has bestowed. Every man listening to Joshua's voice must have commended his courage, even though he did not fully follow his example. This decision, we may be absolutely sure, Joshua never regretted. He is now near the end of his long and superb career. He is addressing a somewhat degenerate generation, but he rings out his decision and utters his challenge with an enthusiasm and devotion which must have stirred the hearts of his hearers even as our hearts are moved to this day as we read his words.

All true religion must have in it this element of personality. We cannot too strongly press the idea that true religion is personal. Every man must have personal transactions with the Lord God, if religion is to be the dominant element in the man's soul. All responsibility must have in it this element of personality. No man can believe and obey for his brother man. Neither the father nor the mother can

believe and obey for a child. Men, women, and children must personally belong to God and be consecrated to his service. In this way, every home may become a house of God, and be thoroughly permeated by a spiritual atmosphere.

It is impossible to overestimate the solemnity of our personality. It is a characteristic of our conscious, separate existence as independent beings. Personality is a wall, high as heaven and deep as hades, separating every man from every other man. Personality is eternal as God; perhaps even God cannot destroy personal existence. One would suppose that if such destruction were possible, Satan would long ago have been destroyed by the Almighty. The first note struck by a child's conscious existence will echo through the eternities. The thought is tremendously solemn; it also is a thought full of exaltation and even of sublimity. Personality is that which distinguishes one from all other human beings; it is that which constitutes us as separate existences in contradistinction to the animals which perish. Personality consists of at least three attributes—self-consciousness, character, and will. If these be wanting, the element of personality is wanting also; and if that be wanting, a distinct, responsible, and immortal human being is non-existent. This element of personality will continue in eternity. The thought is tremendously solemn; the thought is also transcendently glorious. We are made in the image of God; that image implies personality, and

that personality involves eternal existence. How shall that existence be spent? The answer to that question depends upon our personal relations to the great God. Are we willing, here and now, to choose God and his service in life, that we may enjoy God's presence and continue in his service through the eternal years? Will you to-day, here and now, make the resolution of Joshua your own, declaring that, whatever others may do, you will serve the Lord God with all your heart and soul?

A Parental Resolution.

In the second place, it is to be noticed that this was a *Parental* resolution—"As for me and *my house,* we will serve the Lord." Joshua was determined to be loyal to God in his personal life, and he also determined that, so far as his influence could make it possible, his family should also serve God. In this respect he exercised becoming parental authority. Parents are, in a real sense, God to their children. This responsibility they must recognize, and the duties which it involves they ought constantly to discharge. They actually stand in the place of the Almighty to their children in the early days of their childhood. It is pitiful beyond expression that children should grow up in our country, in our century, and have no definite ideas regarding God and their duties toward him and their fellowmen. Parents incur a solemn responsibility when they neglect the religious education of their chil-

dren. When they fail in their personal duty to God, they cannot expect their children to be devoted to God, whose service, as parents, they neglect. It is one thing to say to children, "Come, let us serve God"; but it is quite another thing for parents to say to children, "Go ye and serve God." If their exhortation is to have weight, it must be supported by their own obedient example in the service of God.

Many parents do not understand their duty and their privilege in relation to their children. They forget that they most honor God when they urge their children personally to enter upon his service. It is to be feared that often they sin against their own children. They certainly sin against their own children when they set them a bad example in their own moral conduct, or in their neglect of duty in failing to acknowledge God as their Lord and Saviour. They sin against their own children when they doubt the possibility and desirability of child conversion. They sin against their own children when they refuse their consent to the public profession of Christ on the part of their children who have truly given their hearts to Christ as their Saviour. Often fathers are peculiarly guilty in all these respects. They leave all the religious duties of the family to the wife and the mother. The mother, in turn, knowing the father to be the head of the house, throws upon him the responsibility even for her own neglect of duty. Parents thus often

trifle with the most sacred moral interests of their children. Joshua, in all these respects, sets every father a noble example. He would bind his house, as well as himself, to God in a bond that never could be severed. Every father and mother ought to follow the example of the heroic Joshua at all these points. The remark has often been made that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world; the history of many great men fully justifies this statement. We know that the mother of Sir Walter Scott was a great lover of poetry and painting, and was a woman of superior intellectual endowments. The mother of Lord Bacon possessed remarkable philosophical tastes, and made corresponding attainments in philosophical pursuits. It is known also that the mother of Nero was cruel, tyrannical, and almost satanic in her spirit and aims. Byron's cynicism and other defective qualities were due, in no small degree, to the violence and ill-temper of his mother. The mother of the Wesleys has been called "the mother of Methodism." She was remarkable for her executive ability, varied intelligence, and profound piety. The sons of all these mothers inherited, to a great degree, the qualities which the mothers conspicuously possessed. The lives of parents are lived over again in the lives of their children. This is a fact of great solemnity on the one side, and of inspiring possibility on the other side. Joshua gives all parents, by his superb resolve, a worthy example and a divine inspiration; it is im-

possible to exaggerate the value alike of this example and inspiration.

A Practical Resolution.

It is to be observed, in the third place, that this was a *Practical* resolution—"As for me and my house, we will *serve* the Lord." Here Joshua rightly emphasized the value of service toward God. He was as practical as he was profound in his religious devotion. Religion is worthless, except it be applied in daily life. We are saved to serve; and only as we serve God by helping our fellow-men, do we really show that we are truly saved. Many men and women greatly fail at this practical point. They unfortunately virtually make the whole of religion salvation and not service. They forget that we cannot show that we love God, whom we have not seen, except as we show our love to our brother man whom we daily see. Many parents are most devoted in their loyalty to traditional creeds and historic catechisms and ritual observances. They would not eat meat on Friday, and would not partake of the communion except before the morning meal. It would be easy to speak with severity of those who are devoted to the mint and anise and cummin, while they neglect the weightier matters of the law. One is amazed at the childishness of many of the instructions given to children, and to communicants of mature years, regarding things to be avoided during the Lenten season.

The requirements of some churches at all these points, tend to bring upon all religion the ridicule of men of sense. The superstitions which have entered into many creeds and practices, make agnosticism or even atheism almost inevitable. The result is that in countries like Italy and France, when men turn away from the superstitions of the church, they practically become agnostics or atheists. The only religion they have known is one of times and seasons, of rites and ceremonies, of superstitious beliefs and of creedal traditions; and, when they lose faith in these human appointments, they turn away from all religion, and thus neglect the divine requirements. At all these points, Joshua's example is most wholesome. He turns our thoughts directly to the service of the Lord our God. His religion was intensely practical. His example teaches us that salvation is subservient to service. True religion is always and everywhere sanctified common sense. Redemption on our part shows itself in service for God on behalf of our fellow-men. We most truly honor God when we most devotedly help men carry the burdens of life and render obedience to God. The idea of the brotherhood of man is impossible apart from the experience of the Fatherhood of God; denying God as a Father, we practically deny man as a brother. The day will come when the Christian church will understand that its noblest liturgy, its sublimest creed, its divinest theology, will be seen in the lowliest service for

men, recognizing them as God's children, and so our brethren in affection. Litanies and liturgies may be recited or chanted, filling lofty cathedrals with solemn sound, but that sound may be unwelcome to God's ear, except the heart of the chanters be in their song, and their hand be extended to their fellow-men in lowly service for God's glory.

What is the sweetest thought of heaven? To that question various answers will be given. Robert Hall, in his paroxysms of physical pain, thought of heaven chiefly as rest; such a conception on his part was perfectly natural. Baxter might have thought of heaven as a place of unbroken worship. Turning to the word of God, we read of the employment of the saints of God that "his servants shall serve him." This is perhaps the sublimest conception of heaven. Many of us would rather live with God on earth than with God in heaven, if heaven were a place of listless repose or of unbroken song. The mind that is active on earth does not want to be torpid in heaven. The loftiest anthem that shall ever fill heaven's high dome, will be some form of service to God, even as the loftiest life on earth is the life of lowliest service. Heaven would be insufferable if it were a place of mental inactivity and spiritual torpidity; the thought of heaven is unspeakably glorious when it is conceived as a place of constant intellectual progress and of profound spiritual service of God in forms adapted to a spiritual environment.

Let us then catch the noble example of Joshua, and make our religion intensely practical. This conception of our duty to God brings us into right relations with him on the one side, and with our fellow-men on the other. He may be orthodox in his creed, regarded simply as an intellectual belief, but he is utterly heterodox in his creed, regarded as a spiritual confession of faith in God, who is neglectful of his duties to his fellow-men. Creeds that are not translated into deeds, are worse than useless; they are contemptible in the sight of men and abominable in the sight of God.

A Professed Resolution.

We notice, in the last place, that Joshua's was a *Professed* resolution. Before this great assembly, on this peculiarly solemn occasion, he *proclaimed* his resolution to serve God. He demands that the people choose whom they will serve, and then he affirms his own determination to serve God, whatever others may do. He knows that the first duty of the catechism of life is to serve God with all the mind, heart, and soul; he will exalt God above all earthly honor, selfish indulgence, or personal interest of any kind whatever. In this sacred place, he will renounce all sinful idolatries and affirm his devotion to all religious duties. Here he will urge the tribes to be true to the God of their fathers; here, in his venerable age and his blameless integrity, he will affirm his own unwavering devotion to Jehovah. He

recognized alike the honor and responsibility of making a choice, and he will declare that choice with unwavering heroism, so soon as it has been made.

In this respect, as in all the other respects named, the example of Joshua is worthy of our earnest imitation. In the presence of the tens of thousands of Israel, he makes his great *confession* of God. He certainly made a good confession before many witnesses. All others might reject God if they chose, but he will loyally trust and heroically confess Jehovah. His was a religion of decision and confession; he would believe with his heart and confess with his mouth Jehovah as the Lord his God. He dared stand alone with God. Thus standing, one man is a tremendous majority.

Christ promised great rewards to those who should confess him before men; but he uttered solemn warnings to those who should deny him before men, affirming that he would deny such before his Father who is in heaven. Christ does not want secret disciples. Nowhere does he give such disciples the slightest encouragement to believe that they are true disciples. No government wants soldiers who refuse to wear the uniform of their country. No country will permit men to call themselves soldiers, if they will not wear their country's uniform and march under their country's flag. Do you tell me that you are a true, though a secret, disciple? How do we know? How can we know that you

are a true disciple? Come out, O men and women, and stand loyally and lovingly for Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour! I appeal to you, men, husbands and fathers, that you to-day make the resolution of the heroic Joshua your resolution! When have you spoken to your children about God and their duty to serve him throughout their lives? Have you ever taken one of your children aside, and talked to your son or daughter regarding the things of God and their duty toward their Creator in the days of their youth? Is not your own example standing directly across the path of your children, preventing them from accepting and confessing Jesus Christ? How can you, fathers, stand at the judgment-seat of Christ, meeting your Judge and your own children, when you have neglected your duty by precept and example toward those children? I appeal to you, mothers, that you lead your sons and daughters to the feet and the heart of Jesus Christ! O bring them in the morning of their life into the Master's service, and thus make your children doubly your children, by making them and yourselves the children of your and their Father in heaven! I appeal to you, young men and women, and boys and girls, that you to-day begin the service of God! Make the resolution of this leader in Israel your resolution.

Silence to-day reigns over the valley of Shechem; only the murmuring sounds in the distant town may be heard over parts of the valley. There stand

Mounts Gerizim and Ebal, with all their historic associations. Yonder is Jacob's Well, with the memory of Jesus sitting upon it at the noonday hour; yonder is Joseph's Tomb, with all its historic suggestions. The great assembly addressed by Joshua has passed away, but his words have echoed through the centuries. They fall upon our ears, and they move our hearts this morning. A greater assembly we shall one day behold, when men shall come from the east and the west, and the north and the south, and shall stand before the great white throne of our august Judge. If you confess him to-day, you may claim his promise that on that great day he will confess you, saying, in words of sublime authority and matchless tenderness, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

VI

THE NOBLEST CAPACITY

Text: Only fear Jehovah, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you.—1 Sam. 12 : 24.

THESE are certainly very noble words, and they were spoken by one of the grandest men of Old Testament times. You will notice that at the close of the preceding chapter, we left the assembly of the people at Gilgal, where they made Saul king before Jehovah. There they offered sacrifices of peace offerings, and then Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly. The truly noble Samuel then resigned the government into the hands of Saul, and in this twelfth chapter we have Samuel's speech, when he laid aside his office and the responsibility which belonged to that office. He opens this speech with brave and true words. He challenged all to show that his hands had ever been soiled by a bribe. He did not know the word "graft."

This chapter is really Samuel's farewell discourse, and Saul's coronation sermon. We have a statement of the blessings which God had conferred upon the people. We then have Samuel's earnest exhortation that they may remain loyal unto God, and so

be assured of God's richest blessing. A very remarkable man was Samuel; he has been appropriately compared with Aristides; and Saul, with equal appropriateness, has been compared to Alcibiades. The main motive of Samuel's life was to guard the rights and liberties of the people, to induce them to stand firmly in their loyalty unto God, as the true God of Israel. His power as an intercessor is comparable to the power of Moses in that regard. He was one of the first of the series of prophets in an unbroken line to the end of Old Testament history. He was the founder of academies for instruction in poetry, in music, in loyalty, and in religion. This grand man never appeared grander than when he preached the coronation sermon of Saul, and the farewell sermon of his own wonderful ministry.

Man Should Fear God Only.

Looking now at the text itself, we see, in the first place, as illustrative of man's capacity for God, that man can *Fear* God—"Only fear Jehovah." We are not, of course, to understand the word fear in the sense of a servile acceptance of God's service; rather are we to understand by it the spirit of reverence toward the person of God, and of manliness in the service of God. God's service appeals to all that is most manly in man and most womanly in woman. A man is never so much a man, nor woman so much a woman, as when both are loyal to God in reverence, and devoted to God in service. How shall you

define the word man? What is the origin of the English word man? Study carefully your dictionary, and you will discover that it is carried back to a Sanscrit root meaning to think, to know. If this be the true origin, then the moment you pronounce the word *man,* you have virtually pronounced the word thinker. A man is one who thinks, one who reasons, one who knows. Trace the word into the Latin, and you have the word *mens,* the mind; trace it into English, and you have the word *mean,* in the sense of intend or propose, and also the word *mind;* these go back, without much doubt, to the Sanscrit word meaning to think; some etymologists, however, doubt whether primitive men could have thought of themselves by a term meaning to think. A man, if this etymology be correct, is an animal who thinks, who reasons, who knows. Can animals reason? Sometimes it would seem as if they can. Probably no philosopher can clearly draw the line of demarcation between animal instinct and human reason. It is difficult to say where the instinct of animals ends, and where the reason of man begins. I ask once more, how shall you define the word man? Philosophers and poets all through the ages have endeavored to give definitions of man. Plato gave this definition: "Man is a two-legged animal without feathers." Diogenes heard Plato's definition, and the next day he came into the Academy with a cock whose feathers he had plucked; holding it before the pupils, he said, "Behold Plato's man!"

Then this clause was added to Plato's definition: "With broad flat nails." The definition then became: "A man is a two-legged animal without feathers, and with broad, flat nails." That was the best, apparently, that Plato could give us in the way of a definition of man. Man has been called a "tool-making animal"; and again he has been called "the animal that can make a fire." Man has also been defined as "a laughing animal"; and as "an animal with thumbs."

But what really is man? What is his essential character? What is that element in man which differentiates him from other animals? We may say that an element in this differentiation is the power of reason; but, as I have already said, it is difficult to draw the line between instinct and reason. We must go higher still. Man is a religious being; that is the distinctive quality in man, as contradistinguished from other animals. Both Cicero and Plutarch call attention to the fact that no people has ever been discovered in which there were no traces of religious worship. In the anthem of this morning, when we had the exhortation, "Come and worship," we thus had an appeal to the most universal, as well as to the profoundest, instinct in the human soul. If Plutarch and Cicero were writing to-day, they might make their sentence much stronger than they made it of their own time. With all the discoveries of tribes and nations, none has yet been found in which there was not some form of worship.

The lowest tribe in darkest Africa bows down at least before some fetich. The religious element is the distinctive quality in the human soul. Men are feeling out after God. Not only on Mars Hill, but on the hills and in the valleys of India, and Africa, and the Islands of the Sea, men have erected altars virtually "To the Unknown God." The duty and the privilege of the Christian missionary is to tell men and women of God, the true God whom they, in some fashion, ignorantly worship.

Jesus Christ is the true light that lighteth every man that has come into the world. Sir Edwin Arnold sings his sweet song of Buddha as "The Light of Asia." We ought to sing a sweeter song of Jesus Christ as "The Light of the World." Whatever light came from Zoroaster, or Confucius, or Buddha, or Brahma, was simply a spark, a ray from the central sun, Jesus Christ, the Sun of the moral universe. Man's capacity for God is his crowning glory. Man is made a little lower than the angels; he is God-like in his original nature, for in the image of God was he made. We can have God dwelling in us; we may become possessors of God, partakers of the divine nature. Perhaps there are few words in the Bible more wonderful than these: "Let *us* make man in *our* image." Who are the persons to be understood by the word *us?* Is there not here a hint of the Trinity? Who are to be understood by the word *our?* Is there not here another hint of the Trinity? Was not that doctrine in germ, even

in the opening verses of the Book of Genesis? Apply that truth to the human life. Man has not come from the Father alone; man has not come from the Son alone; man has not come from the Spirit alone; man is not the offspring of any one member of the Godhead. "Let *us* make man in *our* image." Man sprang out of the very heart of the triune God. Every man has in him the elements of the father; he has the paternal instinct; he has the maternal spirit. God is both father and mother to every true man and woman. Man has also the filial instinct, because he has come from God the Son. The sense of sonship, the spirit of sonhood toward God is in every man and woman to a greater or less degree. But man has not come from God the Father, and God the Son alone; he has come from God the Spirit as well. Here I am lost in mystery. We marvel at the intricate problems suggested by the Trinity. I think man is himself a trinity; he has body, soul, and spirit. I cannot understand myself; how can I understand God? I cannot understand the trinity in my own life; how can I understand the triad that is in the life of God?

We find in the New Testament, in one of our Lord's parting words, the echo of that creative command early in the history of the race. Hear these words from the lips of Jesus: "If any man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and *we* will come unto him, and make *our* abode with him." The triune God may be in a man

or woman in some mysterious sense. Man cannot, indeed, *com*prehend God; but man can *ap*prehend God. I cannot take the Atlantic into the hollow of my hand; but I can take a few drops of the Atlantic, and can have the Atlantic in miniature in my hand; and, so far as human capacity makes it possible, I can have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit in my soul. Any man who is living without God and without hope, is living below the possibilities of his capacities. The man who is living without God, is a man who has deliberately taken the crown of manhood from his brow, and thrown it into the dust, has deliberately shut his eyes to the gleaming light of God's sunshine, has deliberately closed his ears, that he may not hear the celestial music of divine choirs. O man, woman, I appeal to your manliness and to your womanliness! Be a man, be a woman, and not a thing. Be allied to angels and God, and not to creeping things and Satan. You have a capacity for God.

Man Should Serve God in Truth.

It is interesting to observe also, in the second place, that this capacity for God shows itself not only in reverence, but in *Service*—"Only fear God and *serve* him." Service follows reverence. A deedless creed is less valuable than a creedless deed. Better have no creed which you can formulate, if only your life be marked by deeds of obedience to God and service for man, than to have deedless

creeds. That is a very imperfect service which has not in it the element of reverence; and that is a very partial reverence that has not in it the practical outcome of service for God and for men.

It is interesting also to observe that this service must be "in truth"; not in words only, but in acts; and in words and acts which are expressive of the deepest love and loyalty of the soul. Truth is comparable to silver that has been seven times refined. Truth will set up its banners, and sing its triumphal songs, after all its enemies have been driven out of the field. Pythagoras said, "If God should appear among men, his body would be light and his soul would be truth." The very soul of God, if I may reverently so speak, is truth. Truth is eternal. Truth comes from God, and truth leads us back to God. Truth is a crystal stream, pouring forth from the very throne of God. Truth is the voice of nature, and the voice of God. There is truth in the stars, in the breeze, in the flowers, in the streams. Truth is the daughter of God, truth is the queen of heaven. Let us serve God in truth.

> Truth crushed to earth shall rise again:
> The eternal years of God are hers;
> But error, wounded, writhes with pain,
> And dies among his worshipers.

Man Should Consider God's Providences.

And now you will notice, in the third and last place, that in reverencing and serving God, we are

to *Consider God's Providences*—"Only fear Jehovah, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you." The trouble with men is that they will not think. They are unworthy of the meaning of the word *man*. They will not consider God. "My people doth not consider," said God. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Jesus said: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Men are stupid, they are dull, they will not consider; they are untrue to the meaning of the word man. If they would consider God, they would be godly. If you would consider the great things that God hath done for you, you would be children of God. It is a reflection on your powers of reason, if you are an enemy to God. The fact that you are opposed to God, shows that you are not thinkers, shows that you are lacking in mentality. The great thinkers of the world to-day, on both sides of the sea, are believers in God. There is not in the world to-day, so far as is generally known, a great orator, or great poet, or profound philosopher, who is opposed to God. Thinkers are synonymous with men, and men who think deeply and reverently, are men who believe in God. The unbeliever is the non-thinker; the true rationalist is the religionist; the non-religionist is

the irrationalist. I will not allow any man to put rationalism in opposition to religionism. It used to be common to hear that done by preachers; but they were narrow preachers. Rationalism is religionism, when the rationalism is true, and just, and rational. "Come now, and let us reason together," saith God. He appeals to reason. Think of the great things God did for Israel; think of the great things God has done for us! We are then to be learners, pupils, disciples in God's school. Matriculate to-day in the celestial university. Come and make Jesus Christ, the world's foremost thinker, your Professor. Scholars rule the world.

Two great things Samuel pressed upon the people, in this sermon, as to the elements of his power: teaching and praying. The prophets of Israel were greater far than the kings of Israel. With the exception of David and Solomon, Israel never had a king that would compare, for a moment, with the great prophets of Israel. Away, away with your kings; take off their crowns! Come, ye prophets, ye teachers, and receive your coronation! Ye are the masters of the world! What king was comparable to Moses, omitting David and Solomon? What king to Samuel, to Elijah, to Elisha, to Isaiah, to Jeremiah, to Ezekiel? Turn, if you will, from the history of Israel and Judah. Study Greece. Who ruled Greece? Call the roll. Her kings? Her generals? No. Who ruled Greece? Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and other great thinkers. Greece was

truly ruled by her thinkers, by her teachers, by her philosophers. Who has ruled China? Her emperors? Who knows them? How many of them could you name? Emperors—who were they? Who ruled and rules China? Confucius—scholar, thinker. Scholars rule the world. It is not otherwise to-day in our own America. What is the keystone of our national prosperity? Religion. It is the church, the aggregation of all Christ-like souls, which is the real secret of American greatness. Before me sits a cultured Japanese. Let him go back to Japan, as he is going soon—scholar, philosopher, Christian, as he is—and let him tell his countrymen that the real secret of American greatness is the religion of Jesus Christ. Francis Bacon was wont to say, "Knowledge is power." He was right; but it may be power for evil, or power for good. When it is right knowledge, it is resistless power for good. In its last analysis, who administers our government? The Constitution is the power behind the American people's throne. Who made the Constitution? Scholars, logicians, publicists, thinkers, statesmen. Who really carry on great corporations? Thinkers, scholars, scientists. Who build our railways, construct our bridges, and open up the newer parts of our country? Behind the great corporations are men who understand the laws of nature, the laws of mechanics, and the laws of engineering; men who are students, scholars, scient men. Who command the ships which sail the wild sea? The captains?

Yes, in part; but the real sailors are the men who are masters of the laws of navigation, who know winds, currents, and charts; men who are possessed of scientific knowledge. Who rules this world? Jesus Christ. I rode in the railway train from Benares; by my side sat a Brahman, distinguished for his high caste; we talked of many things. I asked him this question, "Who is the ideal man of the world?" He pulled open his tunic, and showed me the yellow threads, indicative of his Brahmanistic rank. I asked him again, "Who is the ideal man of the race? Is he Buddha, Brahma, Zoroaster, Confucius?" He smiled at me sadly for a moment; his voice grew soft; his spirit became tender; and he said, "The ideal man of the human race is Jesus Christ." Will you, men and women, take Jesus Christ for your Master? Will you make him your ideal? Will you let Jesus Christ fill your soul? Only thus shall you fully demonstrate your sublime capacity for God; only thus shall you be worthy of the name of men and women.

VII

THE THIRTY-SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

Text: Thirty and seven in all.—2 Sam. 23 : 39.

THIS text is taken from the chapter which gives us the last words of David. Those last words are really a song in highly poetic language. The poem contains a glorious prediction of the kingdom and conquests of the Messiah. David was not only the finest poet in Israel, but he is also the divinest poet in Christianity. Thus the sweet psalmist of Israel is also the sublime singer in every part of the world where revealed religion is preached and professed.

You will notice also that the chapter contains an account of the exploits of David's heroes. It is a remarkable catalogue of men and events. David had the power of attaching men to himself by stronger bonds than hooks of steel. The writer of this chapter apparently takes peculiar pleasure in calling the honor roll of these worthies of David. As he reaches the close of the chapter, he sums up all that he had said in the words of the text, "Thirty and seven in all."

By a permissible accommodation, I take these words of the sacred writer and apply them to the

thirty-seven years of this present pastorate. We may think of each one of these years as, in hope at least, one of the worthies of Him who was David's son and David's Lord.

Peace and Harmony.

What then are some of the characteristics of these years that have gone? We may say, in the first place, that they are thirty and seven years of *peace* and *harmony*. It may seem to some as if that were merely a negative virtue, and scarce worth emphasis on this anniversary occasion. Those, however, who have been in churches where peace and harmony were wanting, are the most ready rightly to estimate their importance. I have always been profoundly impressed with the motto above the tablets behind me. It is found in Hag. 2 : 9. The words are these, " In this place will I give peace." When I chose that motto, it came to me like an inspiration from God. I was charmed alike by its rhetoric, its alliteration, and its spiritual meaning.

It is not meant to be affirmed that there have been no differences of opinion amongst us during these years. Immobility in position and unanimity in thought are found only in cemeteries. Where there is life, there will be differences of opinion. But Christian gentlemen can differ in opinion without losing respect for one another in the deeper and nobler relations in life. One lesson which comes to us with advancing years is respect for the opinions

of others, even while we do not greatly modify our own opinions. As I look out over the ministry in this city, during the past thirty-seven years, I see how churches have been disrupted, how ministers have been dismissed, and how some of them have been wounded to the heart by differences between themselves and their official brethren.

That sorrow has never been mine; peace and harmony have evermore prevailed. I have always felt that this result was due, in no small part, to the existence of a judicious advisory committee. The democratic form of government, in some Baptist churches, has been pushed to dangerous extremes. Business has been brought into church meetings without maturity of preparation, meetings in which young boys and girls were often a large proportion of the voters, and most unwise results have been produced. We can maintain our democratic form of government, and yet have all the advantages of churches that have vestries, or sessions, or a classis. We have had discussions in our advisory committee which, if had before a promiscuous audience, might have produced schisms in the church. We have threshed out differences in that committee room; and we have reached definite conclusions in that committee room. No resolution is ever presented by the advisory committee to the church until that body is a unit regarding that resolution. The pastor is, therefore, surrounded by that strong committee of representative men, and no arrow of criticism

can reach him until it has gone through the bodies of those strong laymen. One is sometimes almost impatient with brother ministers in the denomination because they will not avail themselves of the advantages of a wise advisory committee. Such a committee is the pastor's cabinet. Yet there are pastors all over this State and country who have failed to gather about themselves such a committee; these pastors bring business matters, entirely unmatured, into the church; a free debate arises, and divisions are created. The result in some cases is that the pastor either has to use all his personal influence to maintain his position, or to vacate that position. The officers of this church will readily give a confirmation of the statement that serious difficulties of discipline have been settled without being brought before the church. We managed these difficult cases so firmly, so strongly, so wisely, and so kindly that they were all settled within the limits of that committee room. For our peace and harmony we are largely indebted to the existence of our advisory committee.

Work and Worship.

There have also been thirty and seven years in all of *work* and *worship*. No small amount of work has been accomplished. About five thousand persons have been received in all ways into the fellowship of this church. There have gone out from us two bodies which largely created two other Baptist

churches. There have gone out from us large numbers of young men and women who are filling honorable positions in hundreds of other churches, and as pastors in many pulpits. The children of this church are scattered all over the United States. They are scattered over England, Scotland, Ireland, and other countries beyond the sea. Some of them are missionaries in many lands. We have a great family looking up to Calvary Church as their honored and beloved *alma mater*.

The work might have been vastly greater if there had been more money with which to carry it forward. Every business man knows that he is often greatly limited in his plans and achievements, because he has not more capital. No business man can realize that fact more than does the pastor of this church. My hands repeatedly have been tied for want of money to carry on the Lord's work in our own immediate parish. We started an Armenian work some years ago. It was the most prosperous work among the people of that nationality then in the city. We had a large number here studying God's word and studying English. We had preaching services with fine audiences. The work had finally to be discontinued. Out of that work there are two churches of Armenians in this city, in connection with other denominations than our own. It was our work, ours by right of initiative, ours by the guiding of God's providence; but we had to abandon it. We began a Persian work. It was carried on in

a quiet way; but it was very fruitful. God sent these Persians to us. The influence of this church was felt in Persia. These Persians were converted; they were baptized. A year ago we were obliged to discontinue that work. There is a prospect now that we may be able to resume it in the near future.

In the same remarkable providence of God, we now have a Spanish work under the ministry of our brother Don Samuel F. Gordiano. That work has achieved wonderful results; it promises still greater things even before many months shall pass. We are carrying on that work at one-quarter the expense which would be incurred if it were turned over to any outside organization. We can do work here under our roof, with the facilities at our command, for from one-eighth to one-quarter the expense which any city mission society would be obliged to incur in the performance of the same amount of work. Receive my thanks this morning because you are standing so loyally by this Spanish work.

God gives us in our city and country wonderful opportunities for mission work on behalf of foreigners. Instead of our sending missionaries to all foreign lands at enormous expense, many foreigners are paying their own passage to America, to New York, and to Calvary Church. Many who were brought up in the Roman faith listen in America to the blessed evangel of Christ who, in their priest-ridden countries, would turn a deaf ear to the truth,

and who would violently oppose the missionary of Christ.

But I said that they were years of work and worship. We have given great emphasis to the element of worship in our services. The pendulum, in the days of the Puritans, swung away from formalism. I shall not criticize the men of that day. They had to fight against a formalism that was dangerous and deadly; and if the Romanists observed any religious practice, that was one of the best reasons why Reformers should do the opposite thing. Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists were, for years, unduly under the influence of that Puritan movement. We failed to give sufficient prominence to the idea of worship in our public services. God put upon me, as far as my own thought was concerned, some years ago, a solemn sense of duty regarding the fuller restoration of the idea of worship in our public services. We took some steps in that direction before we left the old location. It took all the pluck I had to introduce so simple a matter as the responsive reading of the Psalms; although this is the form of the public use of the Psalter which assuredly is scriptural. Men said that I was on the road to Rome; some extreme conservatives made me, in that regard, the subject of special prayer. I said, in reply, that if God would only set the Roman Church to reading the Bible in public, I would like, in that particular, to go to Rome. The first Easter Sunday on which we had

flowers in the church, goodly numbers left the church. One smiles to-day as he recalls those days. A deacon in the church refused to have part in taking up the offerings, because some passages of Scripture were repeated before giving out the baskets. We thus have given prominence to the idea of worship. We have striven to give dignity and stateliness and scripturalness to our public services. We have inaugurated a new movement; we are in line with the trend of the hour.

It took all the courage I had to wear a robe in the pulpit, and to urge the robing of our quartet. I reached that latter conclusion, seated in my chair, on the day of President McKinley's funeral service. It was a moment of intense feeling. I looked up that day at the variety in dresses, hats, feathers, and waistcoats; and I said to myself regarding the plumes and other feathers: "Birds, you will come down. This is your last day. Waistcoats, you will be covered." The birds came down, the robes went on, the colored garments were covered. When the question came up as to vestments for our chorus choir, it was soon settled. Some years ago we had a small chorus choir; on and after the first Sunday in May the choir was a flower garden, and every color contradicted every other color. Any man with any sense of color and harmony could not but wish that he could go up into the choir and rearrange, if he could not remove, the colors. The robing of our present chorus was a great step in advance. It

gives quietness, uniformity, harmony, and unobtrusiveness to the work of the choir. It is certain that the present method must command the approval of every right-minded man and woman.

It is surprising that, when this pastorate was begun, there were no uniformed railway conductors in America. There were no uniformed policemen in New York thirty-seven years ago. Conductors and policemen resisted putting on uniforms; they said it was an indignity placed on labor. There were no judges in the courts wearing robes in the early days of this pastorate. Now robes are worn in several courts, and soon they will be in all the courts. This is a movement which belongs to the times. It is indicative of advancing culture, and of progressive civilization. God has enabled us to make these thirty and seven years a period of work and worship.

Culture and Christ.

Permit me to say, in the last place, that they have been thirty and seven years of *culture* and of *Christ*. Culture is a noble word. What does it mean? It means tilling, it means plowing, digging, harrowing, sowing. That is not a cultured field, large parts of which have never felt the plow, or the spade, or the harrow. That is not a cultured man, parts of whose nature are lying fallow. He may have physical culture and be an athlete; he may have mental culture and be an intellectual giant; but if a man's moral

nature is neglected, he is only partially cultured. All parts of the nature, body, soul, and spirit, must feel the plow of God, and receive the seed of truth, in order that the man may claim the honor of broad culture.

There is a very close relation between culture and Christ. All these years Christ has been honored, in purpose at least, in this pulpit. Here to-day are various flags, beautifully blended, the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack, standing for so much that is noblest in history, sublimest in patriotism, and divinest in religion; but above all flags must wave evermore the banner of Immanuel. I would like to be only a voice in this pulpit. I would like in some measure, to be another John the Baptist, saying of Christ, "He must increase, but I must decrease." I want to exalt Christ as my Prophet to teach me, my Priest to atone for me, and my King to command me. This pulpit belongs to Jesus. All the honors are his.

We have passed, during these thirty-seven years, through the *sturm und drang* period in theological thought. We have seen ministers obliged to resign their pastorates, and churches disrupted, because of theological difficulties. Those difficulties have not touched us, in any significant sense. Why? We have not been hampered by creeds made by men in past ages. I hold, and I shall affirm, that creeds, made by men in one age, can be re-made or unmade by men in another age. Every age must do its own

thinking. You cannot tether a living man to the tombstone of a dead theologian, though he be a Calvin, or a Luther, or a Knox. Every man must work out his own great spiritual problems for himself. Thank God, in our Baptist churches, we are not tied down to creeds made hundreds of years ago by men who did not know a tithe as much as we know of all the problems formulated in creeds. Men who belong to churches governed by man-made creeds are obliged to lie down on a Procrustean bed; if they stretch themselves at one extremity, their feet must be cut off; and if they stretch themselves at the other extremity, off must go their ecclesiastical heads. We stand for the living word of the living Lord; and the Bible has in it an expansive power, adapted to the enlarging needs of the hour, a power never possessed by creeds made by men. The only rule of faith and practice in a Baptist church is the word of God. Here we stand; we can do no other; God help us to be faithful to the end!

And now, beloved, with no self-complacency regarding the past, but with the profoundest gratitude to Almighty God, we turn our faces to the future. Our noblest work is yet to come. With God's help, we gird ourselves to-day with greater vigor of body, with greater clearness of head; and we pray that it may be with greater sweetness, gentleness, and Christliness of heart for future work. Will you give me your hands afresh? Will you

give me your hearts anew? I want neither hand nor heart for myself; but I want hand and heart for Christ. Let me take your hand and put it in his hand, and then you will strengthen me and I shall strengthen you in God, for nobler work on earth and ineffable bliss in heaven.

VIII

THE COMMENDABLE OBEDIENCE

Text: When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.—Ps. 27 : 8.

THE text is taken from a noble and inspiring psalm. This psalm stirs the blood like the blast of a trumpet. It brings before us a sufferer, deprived of human comfort, and surrounded by foes intent on his destruction. He implores the aid of God, and soon he graciously receives divine help. Like the psalm which precedes it, and the one which follows it, it may refer to the time of Absalom's rebellion.

There is an evident remembrance in the psalm of God's sanctuary. The heart of the psalmist rises to a joyful trust in God as the psalm reaches its eloquent close. It thus becomes a vehicle of pious aspiration for all God's people in times of trial. The syntax of the text is very obscure; but its general meaning is sufficiently definite. A literal translation of the Hebrew would be, " To thee hath said my heart, Seek ye my face; thy face, O Lord, will I seek." The idea is that the psalmist's heart had in mind God's command, " Seek ye my face," and to that command his heart made prompt reply, " Thy

face, O Lord, will I seek." The old version very clearly gives the meaning of the original, but it has added a good many explanatory words.

Let me emphasize this morning some of the characteristics of obedience to God which are indorsed in this text. First of all, permit me to call attention to the *promptness* of this obedience—"When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." Instantly with God's command came the human response. The psalmist pleaded no delay; he offered no excuse. He immediately complied with the divine command. No sooner said than done, is the thought in the psalmist's response. "To obey is better than sacrifice," said the prophet Samuel. "To obey," said Luther, "is better than to possess the power to work miracles." The heart should repeat God's commands as the rocks among the Alps repeat the notes of the peasant's horn; the peasant blows his horn, and instantly its echoes from rock to rock and from valley to valley are heard, the response being immediate and exact. Obedience is the proof of love. Christ said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words." We can give no other evidence so conclusive of our love as prompt and exact obedience.

The first rule in the order of St. Francis was implicit obedience to the commands of the Superior. One day a monk was refractory. By order of St. Francis, a grave was dug, and the disobedient

monk was placed therein. Others were commanded to pack in the earth. St. Francis asked, "Are you dead?" No answer came from the disobedient monk. "Fill in the earth," was the next command. It reaches his breast. "Are you dead?" No answer. There was in that grave a man almost as stern as St. Francis himself. "Fill in the earth," it was again ordered. It reaches the man's throat; now it covers his chin. The refractory monk, seeing only death before him, now yields. He stands with his lips just above the earth; he cries out, "I am dead!" He is removed from his grave; St. Francis has triumphed. In a nobler, sweeter, and diviner sense, the child of God should be dead to self and to sin, and alive only and wholly to Jesus Christ as Lord and Master; and then the moment such a man hears the divine command, God will hear the human answer, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek."

Obedience Must be Hearty.

You will observe also the *heartiness* of this obedience—"My heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The psalmist's service was no lip service. It is possible for men to render creedal obedience to God, while there is no heart loyalty given to God. A man may recite creeds by the yard, but if his faith is only on his lip, his confession will never reach the ear of God. God de-

mands the heart. God says, "My son, my daughter, give me thine heart." God well knows that then he will have the lips, the hands, the feet, and the entire being. Jacob, for the love of Rachel, was willing to serve seven years. How mighty is even human love! How resistless is heart power! The seven years were like a day! Love lightened Jacob's labor; love filled his sky with light, and his heart with joy. How love glowed in his soul so that praises were on his lips! When our hearts are in God's service then that service becomes easy though it leads to the block.

The executioner asked the heroic Sir Walter Raleigh how he would have his head lie. Sir Walter looks up with a smile and replies, "If only the heart be right, it matters not how the head may lie." If only our hearts be right with God, our heads shall scarcely be wrong with God. Every man is an atheist in heart before he is an atheist in head. There are few intellectual unbelievers in the world. I never met one who was an unbeliever purely from intellectual convictions. The heart was estranged before the head became perplexed. Beautiful is the psalmist's response, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek."

The Universality of Obedience.

Observe also the *universality* of his obedience. There is not, so far as I can discover, in this text a

single qualification placed on his obedience; not one limitation is suggested. One of the sweetest words spoken by any woman in the New Testament, was spoken by Mary the mother of Jesus. Yonder the guests were assembled at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. A perplexity has arisen about the wine, whose supply was failing. The hosts are extremely anxious. The servants know not what they shall do; but the mother of Jesus goes to them and says, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." She was not inspired; she was not divine. She does not deserve the idolatrous worship often ignorantly or wickedly offered her. But she uttered a wholesome and sublime truth at this wedding feast: I would like to make my sermon this morning, in some measure, an echo of her words, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." If he says, "Be baptized," then be baptized. Do not expect to obey him by being rantized, when he commands you to be baptized. Why stand hesitating when Jesus speaks? He is King in Zion. Care not what men may say; care wholly for what Jesus says. We can reconstruct Tennyson's words, and say regarding Christ's commands:

> Ours not to make reply,
> Ours not to reason why,
> Ours but to do and die;

thus giving strict obedience to the commands of Jesus Christ.

General Havelock visited London when his

honors were multiplied. He had invited a distinguished gentleman to dine. They sat at the table, and Mrs. Havelock looked up and said, "Where is Henry? Where is Henry?" "Oh!" said General Havelock, "poor boy, I asked him to wait on London Bridge." The general hastened to the bridge; and there in the darkness and chill sat his boy. He smiled as his father came up, and said, "Father, I did it; I waited till you came!" Havelock said, "He is an example of the training of the soldier's boy." God grant that our Father in heaven may see in us some measure of the true example of brave and obedient soldiers of Jesus Christ!

Obedience Must be Resolute.

I would have you notice also the *resoluteness* of his obedience—"My heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, *will* I seek." We want men with moral backbone. We want men who fear God, and fear none beside. God desires men with brains, and men with pluck, and men with moral stamina; men wholly consecrated to the Lord God. Obedience to high ideals of duty gave men like Bright and Gladstone, and half a dozen men on our side of the sea, their power.

Character and ability make it possible for Great Britain to rule India. I asked a babu what he thought of the British courts in India, and quick as a flash, he said, "There is not money enough in all India to bribe a British judge." The British are

the most law-abiding people in the world to-day. I asked about the native Indian judge. The reply was, "The moment the bribe is taken, the case is decided." We need men of resolute wills along the line of right and duty. We need men who believe in God and who will stand by their creed. A noble Tory lord twitted John Bright when he was ill, sneeringly saying, "Mr. Bright has brain disease." Mr. Bright promptly replied, "It may be some comfort to the noble lord and to his family to know that he is never likely to be afflicted with that disease." But many men are afflicted with heart disease, and they fail to render right service for truth and for God. We want men of decision, men who can say, "Yes," and men who can ring out, "No," so that the echoes will be heard in all the circles in which they move. The world was mastered by Cæsar when he dashed into the Rubicon; "the die is cast," he said, as he plunged into the stream at the head of his legions. The man who could say, "I came, I saw, I conquered," was a man to rule the world. We want, in the kingdom of God, men of decision. It has been well said that on the tombstone of many a man the secret of his failure could be written thus: "He dawdled, and was always behind time." Many a man fails when he might be a force for righteousness if only he had resoluteness of will.

> Better like Hector in the field to die,
> Than like a perfumed Paris turn and fly.

Obedience Must be Exact.

Notice also the *exactness* of obedience—"When thou saidst, Seek ye my *face;* my heart said unto thee, Thy *face,* Lord, will I seek." The answer is most exact. The words of his reply are the echo of the command he had received. I am delighted as I observe the perfect exactness of this reply. Obedience ought always to take the form of exactness to the command. Frederick Robertson, the brilliant preacher of Brighton, has well expressed this thought, "Nothing can be love to God which does not shape itself into obedience." Then he adds: "We remember the anecdote of the Roman commander who forbade an engagement with the enemy; and the first transgressor against whose prohibition was his son. He accepted the challenge of the leader of the other host, met, slew, and spoiled him; and then, in triumph, carried the spoils to his father's tent. But the Roman father refused to recognize the instinct which prompted this act as deserving the name of love. Disobedience made the act worthy of death!" Who are we that we dare put our wills in opposition to the word of Jesus Christ? When Jesus says, "Believe and be baptized," what right have we to take those not capable of believing, and make them the subjects of baptism, or even of rantism? We must take Christ's commands in the order in which they were given. Then we shall show that we are loyal sol-

diers of Jesus Christ, who has bought us with his precious blood, and who is the Captain of our salvation.

Obedience Must be Personal.

Notice, in the last place, the *personality* of the psalmist's obedience—"When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; *my* heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will *I* seek." We too often pass God's commands to others. We apply the sermons, which ought to come close home, to our neighbor in the next pew. We believe that the appeals made for missions are made to our neighbors and not to ourselves. We ought to be profoundly impressed with this element of personality, that enters into God's commands. Often has mention been made in this pulpit of the solemnity of personality. It is difficult rightly to define *personality*. We can discover the component parts of the word; but it is difficult to define either *person* or *personality*. There is a solemnity in the thought of the *Ego* in all of life. The first cry of a new-born babe strikes a note which will echo through the eternities of God. There is in such a birth a new life, a new individuality, a new personality. Moses, at the time of the Transfiguration, had been, in round numbers, about fifteen hundred years in heaven; and Elijah, in round numbers, about one thousand years; and yet, on the mount of Transfiguration, it was Moses, and not Aaron, and not Joshua, but Moses. He had not

lost his personality in fifteen hundred years. He has not lost it yet. He is Moses still at God's throne. So it was and still is and ever will be Elijah. It will be you, and you, and I, at the judgment seat of Christ. It will be you that will hear Christ say, " Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Or it will be you that will hear him say, " Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Our parents are in us; so are our forebears for generations; but, after all, it is I, I, I; it is you, you, you. We must answer before God; we must stand at the judgment-seat of Christ. We must also respond to God, when he says, " Seek ye my face." O answer God now! Just now in the quiet of this holy place, this house which is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven. God speaks; listen: " Seek ye my face." Let each one reverently say, " Thy face, Lord, will I seek." God grant it, for Jesus' sake.

IX

THE THREEFOLD POSSESSION

Text: Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.—Isa. 12 : 2.

THIS is a very beautiful text, and it is taken from an unusually noble chapter of God's word. The twelfth chapter of Isaiah is a song of thanksgiving for God's wonderful mercies. The eleventh chapter closes with a reference to the deliverance of the nation from the oppression of Egyptian bondage, and the twelfth chapter opens with a burst of song, because of that deliverance. The song, sung by tens of thousands to the music of the timbrel and the accompaniment of the dance on the Arabian shore of the Red Sea, was the model for the song sung by Isaiah, and for the subject of our remarks this morning. God is to be praised for all his acts of mercy; he is to be trusted for all the tokens of his divine favor. Our whole lives should be a *Te Deum;* there is far too little praise in the lives of most men and women. Often our prayers are selfish. Heaven is a place of praise and not of prayer, and our lives on earth ought oftener to catch the spirit of heaven with its

praiseful song, than the spirit of earth with its selfish prayers.

There are three things here affirmed of God in his relation to this inspired singer. The first is that God has become his *strength;* second, his *song;* and third, his *salvation.*

Divine Salvation.

The greatest act of God's mercy is his *Salvation.* This word suggests to the mind the sweetest meditations, and it inspires the heart with the grandest and sublimest aspirations. Israel had been saved from political servitude, but the salvation here named by Isaiah is the salvation which reaches its lofty climax in spiritual redemption. We are not simply saved from present evil, but we are exalted to present good, and to future bliss.

The first great element of this salvation is our redemption from sin; we are delivered from its power and, consequently, released from its penalty. Salvation also includes our restoration to God, now to his favor, and finally to his immediate presence. It also includes ultimately our likeness to God; it is unlikeness to God which banishes us from God's presence. Religion is the binding of the soul to God; irreligion, as I have often reminded you, is irrational. Religion is the highest possible reason. Ungodliness is also unmanliness. I wish that this idea had been taught me when a boy. Many boys have the idea that to be manly is to be ungodly,

that to be religious is to be effeminate. Never was there a greater mistake. If you are an irreligious man, you are not half the man you would be if you were a religious man. The noblest manhood is found in godliness; godliness is Godlikeness. As we become like Jesus Christ, we become noble in manhood, clarified in intellect, and exalted in character. Jesus Christ was the ideal Man of the human race, and the race becomes ideal in proportion as it becomes like Jesus Christ. He was not *a* man; he was *Man*. All that is noble in womanhood was in Jesus Christ; all that is superb in manhood was in Jesus Christ. He gathered up into himself the nobilities of all races and all ages; he was Jew and he was Gentile. It seems to have been divinely ordained that Gentile blood should flow in the veins of Jesus Christ. It is a marvelous thing that, in the deepest sense, he belonged exclusively to no race; but that he absorbed all the races. When a Dutch painter gives us a Christ, he is a Dutchman; when an Italian, he is, to some degree at least, an Italian; but the real Christ was above and beyond the characteristics of any race, of any country, of any century. He was *Man,* in all that is noblest and divinest in humanity. It thus comes to pass that men of the Occident and men of the Orient are equally at home with Jesus Christ. Men of literacy and men of illiteracy are on terms of intimacy with Jesus Christ. The profoundest philosopher can sit at his feet and learn from his wisdom; and the humblest

peasant is equally welcome in the school of Jesus Christ. In proportion as we rise above our littleness, our narrowness, and our selfishness into the largeness, the sphericity, the orbicularity, the universality of Jesus Christ, do we become superb men, wearing the crown of honor on our brows, and having the love of God and of man in our hearts. That type of manhood is the ideal set before us; and salvation, in its largest sense, includes the possession of this noble manhood.

That is an utter misconception of salvation which makes it a dexterous scheme whereby a man may escape eternal punishment. This thought of religion was once quite too much emphasized in exhortations and sermons. Men should be followers of God, if there were no heaven to be won and no hell to be shunned; they ought to follow Jesus Christ, because only thus is the noble life possible. The man who refuses to follow Christ lives in the deep, dark, damp dungeon of his soul, instead of dwelling in the sunny cupola, breathing the air of heaven, and basking in the sunshine of God's uplifted face. Such a life is what salvation means; it secures a noble manhood; it results in a beautiful womanhood. Heaven is not an accident; heaven is a consequent; heaven is a resultant. Heaven is the logical necessity of the Christly life, the life now described. Where a man has salvation in this large and true sense, he cannot be kept out of heaven; he has in some measure heaven here and

now; he is partially in heaven here and now. It is true that heaven is in him and he is in heaven here on the earth. Heaven and hell are not the results of arbitrary enactments of God. They are the inevitable results of the lives we live on earth. A man who lives for God, by a law of moral attraction, goes upward. All the angels in heaven, and all the demons in hades, could not keep such a man out of heaven; and the man who lives a gross, vulgar, sinful, sensual, devilish life, by a law of moral gravitation, goes downward. With the utmost reverence be it said, God himself cannot, except he should change the laws of the universe, keep that man out of hell. He is there now; he has hell in his soul. The life hereafter is only an intensification of the life that is here and now. No arbitrary decree of God can send men to bliss or to woe. All these truths are meant when we sing our song of God as our salvation.

Divine Strength.

Notice, in the second place, that God is not simply our salvation, but God is also our *Strength*. These two thoughts are very closely related; indeed, they are inseparable. All our religious services conduce to this end; they are to make us strong in the Lord; they are to develop the noble characters to which your attention has been called. Sweet is God's promise, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." It requires no little strength to live the Christian

life. We are surrounded by foes; we have to fight the battle daily; we are in the enemy's country; we are, indeed, marching through it to "fairer worlds on high." But we must put on the whole armor of God, that we may fight against the wiles of Satan. There lies the armor which God has provided; but it is utterly worthless except we put it on. Thus the apostle exhorted us to put on the whole armor of God. No part must be omitted, the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes in which we are to march, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. All these pieces of armor, it is interesting to observe, are defensive, with but one exception. Only one piece of armor is offensive—the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. God thus becomes our strength. No wonder the psalmist sings so joyously in the Twenty-seventh psalm, from which we read this morning, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" Why should a man fear? "The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" That psalm is an echo of the song of Isaiah, which we are studying this morning. Notice the suggestive words, "When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh"—what happened? Get the striking picture clearly in your thought. There stands the psalmist; here are the enemies and the foes running upon him; now they are near him;

they are ready to strike him. He stands still; he fears not. Watch the result. See the enemies; they are stumbling, reeling, falling; but the psalmist stands untouched, unharmed, unalarmed! Could anything be more beautiful? Could any description be more inspiring? Gloriously he stands in the strength of the Lord his God, while all his foes in utter weakness stumble and fall at his feet.

A little later in this psalm, the writer gives us an entirely different picture. It is now the time of trouble. The Lord has ready his tabernacle, his tent, his pavilion; there is a secret place in that tabernacle; and to that secret place only the Lord's intimate friends are admitted. The Lord admits not only to the open court, but to the private apartment in the tent. In the tents of the Arabs, to this day, there is a woman's compartment, and it is death for a man to go there uninvited. Sisera was invited by Jael, and he went into the woman's compartment, because there he had every reason to believe he would be absolutely safe. She took advantage of him, advantage of his weariness, and his utter helplessness, and she drove with the huge mallet the wooden nail through his brain. But his reasoning was right; that was the safe place. Now God has in his pavilion a secret place, and God permits his saints to rush into the secret place of his tabernacle. What foe can ever find a saint who is in the secret place of God's tabernacle? What arrow of criticism can ever pierce a child of God

who is hidden in God's pavilion? No wonder the psalmist can sing, "Now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me." When a man leans on the Rock of Ages, he is safe. When Roderick Dhu blew the blast of his horn, men stood up as if they were born out of the sod. When we call upon the name of Jesus Christ, his tabernacle opens; and entering we stand before the Rock of Ages; and there we shall be safe from all the onsets of all our foes. Glory be to God's great and holy Name!

The Divine Song.

You will notice that God has become our *Song*. This forms the fitting climax of the line of thought in this text. Some Christians have God for their salvation, and God for their strength, but they have not God for their song. The churches are full of songless Christians. They are as out of place, because songless, as birds would be if songless in a grove. When the love of God is in the heart, the song of God will be on the lip. A Christian whose soul is not stirred by the love of God is a Christian whose lips will not move with the song of salvation. When God is the glory of our salvation and our strength, God will be the subject of our song. Only those who never knew our God may refuse to sing; but those who know his love must sing a sweet song regarding that gracious love, even while they are passing through this world to "fairer

worlds on high." One reason why I so greatly rejoice in the work of our choir is that we give such prominence to song, holy song, sacred music. Many churches have failed at this point; many congregations are silent when they should be songful; and the work of a great chorus is, in part at least, to help all the people to praise God with glad hearts and with grateful lips.

We surely can sing of God as he puts forth his power to save. Salvation is the very culminating point of our sweetest song. Every nation has some surpassing event which it celebrates in joyful and grateful songs. The songs of a nation are expressive and at the same time determinative, to no small degree, of the history of a nation. Our national hymn is our national creed. Take the national hymn of Great Britain and analyze it, and you will find therein echoes of Britain's history; you will also find prophetic germs of Britain's future. Take the national song of Russia, and you hear in it the wail of suffering, and the shout of them that triumph. A similar remark will apply to the national songs of all the nations of the earth. The great event in Israel's history was the deliverance from Egyptian bondage; but I venture to say that Isaiah, in this chapter, sings of a nobler deliverance, of a grander salvation, of a diviner triumph. Turn to the history of Greece, and you see that she can never forget her Thermopylæ. Thermopylæ—what does the word mean? It means the "hot

gates," coming from two Greek words, *thermos*, hot, and *pyla*, gate. It was a hot gate, indeed; it was a gate of death to the foes of Greece; it was a gate of glory to the friends of Greece. There was the famous pass leading from Thessaly into Locris, and so named from the presence of several hot springs; it was the scene of the heroic death of Leonidas and his immortal three hundred Spartans, in their effort to stem the tide of Persian invasion, 480 B. C. Can Greece ever forget her Thermopylæ? Never, while Greek blood flows through Grecian veins. Can Germany forget her Leipsic, the scene of two great battles of the utmost importance, not only in the history of Germany, but in the history of all Europe? Can Russia forget her Moscow? Never, while Russian rivers flow and Russian hearts beat. Can Britain forget her Waterloo? Never, while the sun rises and sets. Can you forget the day you won a victory over self and sin and Satan, the day you stood erect as a child of God, and an heir of glory, with the love of God in your heart and the hope of glory in your life? Better that your heart should cease to beat, than that you should forget that you are a soldier of Jesus Christ. All great poets have had their period of poetic conversion, their period of new birth, their day of manifold regeneration. Shakespeare, Dante, Milton, Tennyson, Lowell, Longfellow—these all had their new life when they came, in their poetic visions, into self-consciousness; this experience

was their poetic regeneration, their biogenesis, their renaissance. Every man may have his time of new birth, the dawn of a new consciousness of a nobler manhood and of personal touch with God.

This experience is the most wonderful moment in a boy's life. I can no more forget that experience than I can forget my existence. The whole world was new to me. God was new; he was a Father now; he was a gracious Redeemer now. What a little rebel I had been! But now my heart broke, my will submitted, my soul melted, and I knelt at the feet of Jesus as a penitent boy; and then I rose up a new boy in Christ Jesus. That was the Waterloo for my old life. Have you ever known an experience somewhat of that character? We never come to our noblest self until we have gone through the period of consciousness of a new relation with God. We have somewhat lost the force of these truths, because we have been so mechanical in our religion. We need, as Oliver Wendell Holmes said, to "depolarize" many of our religious phrases, and get our religious thought into new terms, the terms of the twentieth century. This experience of the new birth, the new relationship to God, the new life in Christ is vastly more real than any new experience of a scholar, a poet, or a statesman, when he comes into relation with his larger life in the great world of thought. How well you remember when you studied geometry; perhaps you studied it at the first in a purely mechanical way,

and then the marvelous science dawned upon you, the meaning of angles and triangles, the relation of part to part became real; and you were then born again, geometrically, into a new scientific world. You studied Latin, you recited mechanically; all for a time was meaningless, but gradually the significance of the grammar flashed upon you, the relation of the parts in the syntax became significant, and you were born again linguistically. Many men go along in religion in a mechanical, formal, meaningless fashion; but the moment a man's heart comes into living touch with God, his eyes are opened, his ear is opened, his heart is changed, and instead of carrying about with him a stone in his bosom, he carries a renewed heart. When God says, "My son, give me thine heart," he responds, "Yes, Lord, here and now."

Is not God speaking to some in this audience this morning? Often our sweetest times in this service are on stormy days; the quiet, the hush, the sacredness, and the conscious presence of God are then especially felt. God is speaking to some woman, saying, "My daughter, give me thine heart"; to some one of these dear young women in the choir; to some one of these noble men, God is saying, "My son, give me thine heart." Make God your salvation, your strength, your song this morning. You will then learn the first notes of this heavenly song, as we bow at the cross of Christ. You will then at the last chant the Hallelujah Chorus of that

song under heaven's lofty dome. My dear young friends, are any of you who sing God's praise now, never to sing God's praise in heaven? Are any of you to be songful on earth, and songless at death and in eternity? Make God, this morning, I beseech you out of an earnest and loving heart, make God your salvation, your strength, and your song!

X

THE LIFEFUL LOOK

Text: Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.—Isa. 45 : 22.

PERHAPS it is permissible to imagine that part of the employment of the redeemed in heaven is the repetition of the texts of Scripture which led to their conversion. One can well suppose that such an exercise would greatly honor God's word, magnify God's grace, and still more fully celestialize the spirits of the redeemed. Such an exercise would be greatly profitable to the saints of God during their earthly pilgrimage; we can, therefore, understand how ennobling and divinizing such an experience would be on the part of the saints in glory. Augustine, the famous bishop of Hippo, the greatest of the Latin Fathers, and one of the most eminent doctors of the Western church, would recite Romans 13: 13, and in the recitation he would be reminded of the most crucial and, at the same time, the most blessed experience of his remarkable career. Martin Luther, the heroic reformer, would recite with holy joy the words, "The just shall live by faith." In the recitation, he would be re-

minded of his visit to Rome, of his climbing on his knees the staircase of Pilate, the *santa scala,* and of his consuming desire to find peace with God by the performance of various penances. The light flashed upon his soul with the incoming of this passage of Scripture. That was the turning-point in his heroic career, and one of the blessed moments in the history of the Protestant Reformation throughout the world. Oliver Cromwell, the greatest man whom England has yet produced, would be reminded of his thrilling experience when the bullet, which might have pierced his heart, was stopped by the Bible in his pocket, the bullet resting on the words, " Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." That was, indeed, a thrilling moment in the experience of him who afterward became Lord Protector of England, and a stronghold of Puritanism in England, and of Protestantism throughout the world. Brave and immortal John Bunyan would recite the passage, "And yet there is room." That was the Scripture which brought hope, joy, and peace to his troubled soul. He had long felt that he was too great a sinner to receive God's forgiveness, and to enjoy the blessing of assured salvation. Light from the reconciled face of Jesus Christ came to him through these words in the parable of our Lord.

Perhaps, however, among all the saints in glory, there is no one who would repeat with more ecstatic bliss the text which God made the means of his conversion, than would Charles Haddon Spurgeon. On Sunday morning, January 6, 1856, at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark, London, Mr. Spurgeon preached on the words chosen as the text this morning, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Standing before his great audience, he said: "Six years ago to-day, as near as possible at this very hour of the day, I was 'in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity,' but had yet, by divine grace, been led to feel the bitterness of that bondage, and to cry out by reason of the soreness of its slavery." He then proceeded to tell his audience that he did not go with his father to the usual place of worship, but as the morning was very snowy, he heeded the advice of his mother, and went to the chapel of the Primitive Methodists. For a time, no minister came; then a tall and slender man entered the pulpit, and announced as his text the words already quoted. Setting his eyes upon Mr. Spurgeon, he said, in tones of thunder, "Young man, you are in trouble; you will never get out of it, unless you look to Christ!" He then lifted up his hands and cried out, as Mr. Spurgeon suggestively says, as only a Primitive Methodist can, "Look! Look!" At once Mr. Spurgeon looked to Jesus as his personal Saviour. His heart leaped

with joy at that moment. He had been waiting to do many things, with the hope that, by so doing, he might experience divine forgiveness and spiritual joy; but the moment he looked to Jesus, he found life in the look. He tells us himself that he could almost have looked his eyes away, and that in heaven he will look on Jesus still with joy unutterable. That snowy day was the most joyous day he had ever known; it was also a day of unspeakable blessing to the whole world. That day the greatest preacher since the days of the Apostle Paul experienced the joy of the new life, and entered upon his unique career as the foremost preacher of his time and of the centuries.

The words come to us to-day with great power and with corresponding sweetness. One can well imagine Mr. Spurgeon greeting the prophet Isaiah in heaven with gratitude and joy, because of the words spoken by Isaiah and owned of God to the conversion of Mr. Spurgeon. That unknown Primitive Methodist preacher will wear a crown resplendent with stars; perhaps to Isaiah, under God, will largely belong the honors won, through divine grace, by Mr. Spurgeon in the salvation of tens of thousands in many lands. As we read the words of the text, the picture of the old prophet who, according to tradition, was sawn asunder during the reign of Manasseh, rises before us resistless in power and radiant in glory. He has appropriately been called the evangelical prophet, and his proph-

ecy the fifth Gospel. Gloriously does he tell us of Christ's wondrous birth, beneficent life, atoning death, and triumphant and everlasting kingdom. The simplicity, sweetness, and sublimity of his writings show that he was also a man of fine feeling, poetic genius, and spiritual fervor. As one turned away from Jerusalem to London, and listened to Mr. Spurgeon, he could, by but a slight stretch of the imagination, conceive of the noble prophet as restored to life, and standing in the midst of the modern Babylon, delivering his earnest rebukes, his stirring appeals, and his sublime exhortations. Let us catch the thought of the evangelical prophet, as expressed in the text chosen for the morning, the text so wonderfully owned of God in the conversion of Mr. Spurgeon, that it has really become a Bible classic, and will ever hereafter be associated with Mr. Spurgeon's honored and immortal name.

A Command Given—"Look Unto Me."

This command immediately arrests our attention and demands our prompt obedience. It is not really optional with us whether or not we shall obey this command, except that all obedience is optional, our destiny depending, however, upon the option we shall make. This command rests on a firm foundation; it carries us back to what is said of God in the preceding verse, "A just God and a Saviour." These two facts are placed before us without the

implication of contradiction in the twofold statement. God is just and true in the salvation of his people; he keeps all his promises in securing their salvation. In the cross of Christ, God showed himself just, and at the same time divinely merciful. In that cross he represented his utter abhorrence of sin, and yet showed his determination to make the pardon of sin possible. In the cross, the beautiful language of the psalmist has its perfect illustration:

> Mercy and Truth are met together,
> Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.

The same idea the Apostle Paul expresses in writing to the Romans, when he affirms of God, "That he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." It is God's highest glory that he can be, at the same time, both just and merciful; that he can preserve the honor of his law, and yet pardon repentant sinners. Human governments that constantly exercise mercy become impotent and almost contemptible. Law unassociated with penalty ceases to be law, and becomes only advice. No human administration can constantly exercise mercy and preserve the honor and dignity of the law. But what is impossible among men is possible with God; he preserves the honor of his law, and at the same time, grants forgiveness of sin to the utmost degree. It is a marvelous conception of God, this union of justice and mercy in the same

being, each supplementing and honoring the other, and both revealing God in the fulness, blessedness, and divineness of his holy nature.

This command shows the perfect simplicity of salvation—"Look unto me." We must, of course, understand that the word *look* has in it the idea of turning unto God. It is almost equivalent to saying, "Be converted, turn unto the Lord your God." It is here clearly implied that all men can turn unto God. We are to look to Jesus with the eye of faith. This is a look to him as the only Saviour; it is a look that is earnest, humble, hopeful, and trustful. We are to gaze upon him with the eye of the soul; that we can so look, and find mercy by looking, is no dream of the quietist and no mere meditation of the mystic. It is a blessed experience of the most practical and rational men who have looked with the eye of faith to God, and have experienced life in the look. We are to look exclusively to God in Jesus Christ; none but God can forgive sin. This command humbles all sinners, and most earnestly rebukes all unbelievers. It takes from them their pride, by robbing them of self-righteousness, as a ground of acceptance with God. Men constantly tell us that they cannot accept Christ, because they have not sufficiently repented. Such men are to be reminded that here they are simply commanded to look. We must also remember that this is a look to Christ in his personal character. We are not to look to rites and ceremonies, not to ordinances and

sacraments, not to our own goodness or badness; we are to look away from all these things, and lovingly fix the eye of faith upon our divine Lord and Saviour. We may look to him as on the cross of Calvary he dies for our sins; and we are to look to him as on the throne of heaven he makes intercession for our sins.

We are sometimes told by seekers after Christ that they cannot see him. Mr. Spurgeon, in the sermon to which I have already referred, reminds us that we are not commanded to see him, but only to look. Behold the simplicity of the way of salvation! We have here a command which, in English, consists of only four letters, and two of them are alike. How different God's method of salvation is from that of sacramentarians and ritualists! We are commanded to set aside all reference to rites and ceremonies, and at once look to Jesus, as the dying Israelites who had been bitten by the serpents turned their eyes toward the brazen serpent. Thus, looking by faith, they lived through the power of God, symbolized by the serpent of brass exalted in obedience to the divine command. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so was Jesus Christ lifted up upon the cross. We are to look to him as the trustful patient looks to the skilful physician, as the drowning man to his deliverer; so looking, turning aside from all human means of salvation, we shall experience the unspeakable bliss of joy and peace by believing in Jesus Christ

A Result Stated—"And Be Ye Saved."

This is an unspeakably blessed result. What is salvation, as the word is here employed? There is no sweeter word, in any language, than the word salvation. All men are really seeking salvation in some form. Not all are conscious of the nature of their need, nor of the right source by which that need can be supplied. Men and women all about us are hungry and thirsty, and are striving to satisfy their hunger and their thirst by the things of this life. They need the bread of heaven and the water of life; until they receive these gifts of God, their immortal natures will never know true spiritual peace and joy. Only God can satisfy a human soul. There is an affecting story told of Heinrich Heine, the greatest lyric poet of modern Germany; he was called by Matthew Arnold the continuator of Goethe. He was prematurely disabled by disease, and was utterly weary in body and mind and heart. Going into the Louvre in Paris, he saw the famous statue of Venus of Milo; this is the remarkable statue representing the bewitching goddess of pleasure in the very perfection of physical beauty and charm. It is well known that this statue has lost both its arms, although it still preserves much of its enchanting beauty. No one who has ever seen this statue can forget his first view thereof, as he wandered through the hall of which it is one of the chief adornments. At the feet of this statue, Heine

cast himself in utter despair and hopeless remorse. He said of the experience: "There I lay a long time and wept so passionately that a stone must have had compassion on me. The goddess looked down compassionately upon me, but she was helpless to console me. She looked as if she would say, 'See you not that I have no arms and that, therefore, I can give you no help?'" This is a description of unspeakable pathos. The armless goddess could not help the despairing poet. All the idols of man's imagination, and all the means of salvation of man's discovery, are statues without arms. They cannot enfold one poor lost soul to the throbbing heart of pity and love. We need a Saviour who has arms and who has a heart; we need a Saviour with the tenderness of a mother and the almightiness of God. In Jesus Christ we have both; in him, and in him alone, can full salvation be found.

Salvation implies deliverance from the punishment of sin, because it is, at the first, deliverance from the practice and power of sin. Jesus saves us, not in our sins, but from our sins. The very name "Jesus" was given him because he was to be the Saviour of sinners. Salvation, at the last, results from salvation experienced here and now. Heaven is the natural outcome of divine grace in the heart, while we are upon earth. No man will enter heaven there and then, into whose heart heaven has not entered here and now. Heaven, in its fullest and divinest bliss, is simply the fruition of heaven, in

its germ, as experienced by all true believers when they have looked and lived by faith in Jesus Christ.

THE PERSONS ADDRESSED—"ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH."

We are aware that the ancients were accustomed to conceive of the earth as a vast plain, having well-defined boundaries. This conception of the physical universe gives the form of expression found in this text. This invitation is to be extended literally to the remotest parts of the world. The offer of the gospel is universal; all are invited to embrace salvation, and be saved in harmony with God's boundless love. Nothing is more certain than that God is both willing and able to save all who will believe in Jesus Christ. There is no passage of Scripture, and no decree of the Almighty that limits salvation, if men will only accept the divine invitation. None are excluded but those who wickedly exclude themselves. God has made ample provision for the salvation of the whole world. The atonement of Jesus Christ is sufficient for the salvation of all men; it is efficient for those who believe. God's command is literally to be carried to every creature, and it is alike the duty and the honor of the church to proclaim the gospel in every land, and to sinners of every class.

Another meaning, however, may well be attached to the phrase, "the ends of the earth"; it may include properly sinners of every degree of human

guilt. Preaching one one occasion, Whitefield affirmed that Christ was willing to receive even the "devil's castaways." He was the guest of Lady Huntingdon at the close of the sermon. At the table, with a tone of slight rebuke, she questioned the wisdom of the language which he had employed; just then a rap upon the door was heard; two women were admitted. They asked for Mr. Whitefield, and upon meeting him, they declared that they belonged to the class described as the "devil's castaways," and had long given up all hope of receiving divine forgiveness, but that his words had given them courage to hope for mercy. They knelt before God, confessing their manifold sins; and they went away rejoicing in forgiveness, having found life for a look at the crucified One.

There are many persons in all our communities who are at "the ends of the earth," so far as departure from God and degradation in sin can carry the sons and daughters of men. There is hope for all such, in the characterization of the persons addressed in this text. We are to include, indeed, men of all nations, of all circumstances, and of all characters. We meet, every day, men and women who have almost lost all hope of forgiveness from God and restoration among their fellow-men. I would, in this sermon, include all such among those to whom the offer of salvation is graciously sent by God through the lips of his preachers. In the woman, the Pharisee in his self-righteousness saw

only the sinner; but in the sinner, Jesus Christ in his heavenly love saw the woman still. We need to learn the sweet lesson which Jesus here so beautifully teaches all his children.

THE REASON—"FOR I AM GOD, AND THERE IS NONE ELSE."

There is here a good reason given why men should look to God and be saved. Against him we have sinned; as compared with our sins against our fellow-men, each must say of his sins against God, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." When our sin is reduced to its last analysis, it will be found to be, in its most heinous elements, sin against God. He alone can forgive our sin; and to him alone, therefore, we must look for that forgiveness. Christ said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Christ has been lifted up upon the cross as the divine sacrifice for human sin. We may now look to God through Christ with the full assurance of receiving forgiveness for our sins, however numerous and heinous they may be. God can now be just, and yet the justifier of those who believe in Jesus Christ.

We are to look to God, because he alone can save. No priest can forgive sin, except the great High Priest who sits upon the mediatorial throne. No idol, no man, no angel can save us from the inevitable consequences of unforgiven sin. If, therefore,

any man is to be saved, he must come to God in his appointed way, and receive salvation as God's gracious gift. This text teaches us that God will save men of all ages, nations, climes, and degrees of guilt, if only they seek mercy through Christ as the divine-human Saviour.

This sermon closes, as it began, by emphasizing the divine command, "Look unto me." It is impossible to overstate the importance of this command, and the blessedness of prompt and perfect obedience to the same. The terms of salvation are so simple as to antagonize men who wish, by acts of penance and righteousness, to win salvation rather than to receive it as God's free gift. Immediately some men turn away, as did Naaman when told that his leprosy might be cured by baptizing himself seven times in the Jordan. The folly of such men is unspeakably great; they reject God's divinest blessings, and expose themselves to God's righteous indignation. We ought to look to God for salvation, because there is none other to whom we can look. We are distinctly informed, in one of the verses preceding the text, that "there is none beside me"; and in the text, we are told that "there is none else." If we reject God, there is none other in the universe who can forgive sin and renew the heart by divine grace. Look to him and be saved now. Do not ask that you shall see him; you are simply commanded to look and to live. You may go out of this house to-day redeemed by God's infi-

nite grace and ineffable love. Think once more of that self-condemned young man who sat, on the snowy Sunday morning, in the corner of the humble chapel, and who then and there looked to Jesus Christ, and was gloriously saved. Why may not you follow his example, and receive the same blessed salvation? I hold before you once more Jesus Christ, who was lifted up on the cross as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. O men and women, look and live just now, and learn the alphabet of a blessed experience, whose fulness even eternity cannot exhaust, as you tell that you found life abundant, ecstatic, and eternal, simply by a trustful, personal, loving look at the crucified One.

XI

THE DIVINEST QUEST

Text: Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.—Isa. 55 : 6.

YOU are all familiar with the chapter from which this text is taken. You will recall at once that the chapter abounds in sweet invitations and in blessed promises. It shows us that the work of Christ as a Redeemer permits us to give a universal invitation, an invitation to men of all classes, colors, and conditions, to come to Jesus Christ and be saved. All are invited; salvation is free as the air we breathe; the promise of God's mercy is unlimited as the sunshine. None are excluded, but those who exclude themselves. None are rich enough to buy God's salvation; none are so poor as to be unable to secure God's mercy. None are so good as not to need God's forgiveness; none are so bad as that they may not receive God's forgiveness.

The Duty Inculcated.

I call your attention, in the first place, to the *duty* of seeking the Lord. There are many reasons why this duty should be emphasized. Men are ignorant of God; nothing is more certain than the existence

of this ignorance. God has taken the utmost pains to reveal himself to the children of men. All creation is a revelation of God. God has two great Bibles, the bible of creation and the Bible of revelation. God's thoughts are written all over this physical universe. God's love is seen in creation and in providence as truly as in revelation. The bible of nature is as truly from God as is the Book of revelation. The bible of nature reveals God as truly, though not indeed as clearly, as does the Bible itself. Preachers and others in earlier days made an enormous blunder when they placed the religion of nature in opposition to the religion of grace. Both are one religion. Nature is as much from God as is the Bible. He is the God of the universe. He is the God of providence as truly as he is the God of revelation; and yet the fact remains that men do not know him. One class of men think of God as a cruel tyrant, waiting for an opportunity to inflict, with his iron rod, his wrath on the children of men. Colonel Ingersoll once said to me, "The God I was taught to be the true God, was the God who elected a certain number of men to be saved, and all the rest to be damned forever." And then he said, "I determined to hate him." And I said, "Colonel Ingersoll, if God were such a being, I too would hate him." He added, "The God I was urged to believe in was a God who damned forever little babes, because some one did not put a few drops of water on their faces." And again I

said, "Colonel Ingersoll, if God were such a being, I would commend you for hating him; that is the God of the Middle Ages, and the God of some people in modern times, who still live in the theological atmosphere of the Middle Ages. But you know that the God of the Bible—the true God—is a loving Father, Friend, and Saviour?" My eyes grew moist, and my voice tender, as I said: "Colonel Ingersoll, in the name of honesty, why do you not turn away from the God of superstition to the God of the Bible, and love him, and serve him as your Father, Friend, and Saviour?" Some hyper-Calvinistic theologians have misrepresented God as truly as have agnostics and even atheists.

Others again go to the opposite extreme, and they think of God as a bland, benevolent being who cares nothing for the sins of men. Their conception of him is represented by the French phrase, "*Le bon Dieu*," a good-natured, easy-going God, who is agreeably present when you need him, and comfortably absent when you do not want him. Such men are ignorant of God. There is not a man in this audience who would refuse to serve God, if only he knew God aright. In Ps. 9 : 10 we read: "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee." If you have not put your trust in God, it is absolutely certain that you do not know God. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that men should rightly know God. Men are governed in their daily lives by their knowledge of God; our

conception of Godhood will determine our ideal of manhood. Men become, to some degree, like the gods they worship. Some heathen people are coarse, cruel, and tyrannical, because they worship coarse, cruel, brutal, and tyrannical gods. You cannot possibly expect a man to be better than his god. If the god is bad, the man is certain to be worse; if the god is good, the man is likely to make some approach toward goodness. In Ps. 115 : 8, we have the words regarding heathen gods and their worshipers: "They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them." It is then of the utmost importance that we have correct ideas concerning God, in order that we may make some approach toward correct actions in our daily lives.

Bear in mind also that, if we are to know God, we must *seek* for that knowledge. Religion is marked by common sense in all its relations. We have, unfortunately, often removed religion quite too widely from the sphere and atmosphere of sound common sense. No man ever becomes religious accidentally. The laws of the natural world are also the laws of the spiritual world. There is not one set of laws for this life and another for the life that is to come. Great moral laws sweep through the universe. If our lives are fashioned in harmony with these laws, they will bear us on to success here, and to glory hereafter; if our lives are in opposition to these laws, they will destroy us both for this life and for that which is to come.

If men want learning, they seek it. If they desire wealth, they adopt the means which, according to ordinary laws, are sure to eventuate in securing wealth. What would you think of a man who desired learning, sitting down in idleness, neglecting all study, refusing to go to college, saying he was just waiting until he became learned? What a fool! And yet, all over this church this morning, there are men equally foolish in regard to religious things. What are you waiting for? You say you are not prepared to confess Christ and to join the church. Were you prepared last year? No. Will you be prepared next year, if you remain just as you are? No. When are you going to be prepared? What steps are you taking to be prepared? What are you waiting for? In the name of common sense, I ask you, what are you waiting for? Is God going to give you a moral earthquake? Is God going to speak to you by an audible voice from heaven? For what are you waiting? Is he not speaking now by the still small voice of his Spirit? Why do you not listen? Why do you not move out along the line of God's appointment? "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found"

The Time Indicated.

This leads me to speak, in the second place, of the right *time* for seeking the Lord. Again this morning, as last Sunday morning, I must remind you that youth is God's chosen time. Great and precious

promises are made to those who seek the Lord in youth: "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." Solemn commands are given to us all to seek God in our youth: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." We know that most conversions do occur in comparatively early youth. Converted boys and girls are the hope of the church. I should feel that my ministry was going out in silence, darkness, and hopelessness, were it not for the large numbers of young men and women who are coming forward in this church, to bear its burdens, to share in its honors, and to perform its duties. I cannot too strongly emphasize the importance of urging our children to come to God in their early youth. Some of you parents, I fear, are standing in the way of your children. You ought to be very grateful that we do not let you alone until we feel that we have done our duty. If we, as pastors, were indifferent to you and your children, you would have occasion for legitimate fault-finding; but when we show a tender solicitude, you should show an appreciative gratitude. We shall not unduly interfere; we shall leave you to the responsibility which belongs to you as fathers and mothers. Some of you may live to regret the course you choose to pursue.

Springtime is a good time to be converted. There are great laws in the physical universe, whose

importance we cannot afford lightly to estimate. We cannot think of Easter as occurring in August or July. There was a great philosophy in the selection of the time for the heathen festival out of which our Easter came; for Easter was not at all a Christian institution originally. It was transformed from a purely heathen festival. But why was that particular time of the year chosen for a festival in honor of Eostre? The answer to that question suggests the fundamental law underlying the influence of the seasons upon moral and intellectual life. It is vastly easier for a man to be converted at Easter than in midsummer. You cannot go out to breathe the sweet air of spring, without feeling the uplift in every drop of your blood and in every emotion of your soul. It is a thousandfold more easy to be in a spiritual frame of mind, when the vital forces of nature are throbbing all through this great universe. The intellectual and spiritual life feels the presence and puissance of these forces. Spring is really a new birth; spring is revival; spring is regeneration of the earth and all the forces of nature. It is tenfold easier to give your heart to God, and to begin the Christian life at a time when all life is throbbing with the touch of God's finger, than at other seasons. Tennyson, in "Locksley Hall," uttered a great truth, when he said:

In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished dove;
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts
of love.

And in the spring, a young man's or young woman's affection ought to turn to God; for, at this season, God is manifesting himself anew in every blade of grass, in every bud of flower, in every leaf of tree, and in every odor of fragrance. The voice of nature, rightly understood, is the voice of God.

3 A good time to seek God is a time of religious revival, whatever the season of the year may be. Then, with special meaning, God's word comes to us, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." Then we hear afresh the invitation of Moses to Hobab, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." God's people are then aroused; they are then extending the invitations of the gospel; they are then quickened in their spiritual life; and they are ready to echo the words of Christ's invitation to all who will listen to their voice. I beseech you, men and women, who know God, that you repeat these invitations. O men and women, sow the seed; speak the word; give the invitation! For your own soul's sake, and for the sake of Christ, win stars for your crown. I wonder whether there is any one in this audience who is a true Christian and who has never won one soul to Christ! Can you recall any one whom you have won? You have never known such joy as that of winning souls to Christ.

4. It is a good time to seek the Lord when the Spirit strives. We then hear the voice of Christ, saying, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." We then hear the Spirit, saying, "To-day if ye will

hear his voice, harden not your heart." We hear the voice of inspiration saying, "Quench not the Spirit." There is a time when God will not be near, in the sense in which he is near at other times. There is, without doubt, a time when the Spirit will not strive, as he strives at other times. There is a day of grace in religion, in education, in business, and in social life; and if you neglect that day of grace, you never will have an education, you never will have social recognition as you might have had it, and you never will have business success, such as you might have secured. There is nothing arbitrary in God in relation to this matter of a divine call and the passing away of the day of grace. I met a man a few weeks ago, who said, "I would give all, and ten times more than I now own, if I only had received a college education. My father offered it to me, my mother wept tears of sorrow because I refused father's offer. Now it is too late, the day of educational grace is over." He was right. In the same spirit, according to similar natural and divine law, your day for religious grace will be over. You harden your heart, you close your ears, and the voice of God's Spirit will neither be heard nor felt. I have been in the heart of London at midday, when the bells of St. Paul's rang; but their sound was not heard. The roar in the streets of that modern Babylon silenced the voice of the bells of St. Paul's. But I have been in the city near midnight when the bells rang, and their music echoed

sweetly all over the old city. God's voice will call, but the engagements of life and the pleasures of the world will muffle the sound so that you will not hear the divine voice. For the moment, nothing is said about God's power to withdraw his call. That truth is not denied. It is a terribly solemn truth. You can say, "No, no, no," to God's Spirit, and he will take you at your word, man, woman, child, and you will go through life with a stone instead of a heart in your bosom. But apart from that side of it, this truth has its illustration along the line of strict natural law, without the slightest doubt. If we are to find God, we must seek God. That is the rule everywhere in life; religion is no exception. You remember Macaulay's words, in his "Lays of Ancient Rome," giving the secret of Rome's power:

> For Romans in Rome's quarrels
> Spared neither land nor gold,
> Nor son, nor wife, nor limb, nor life,
> In the brave days of old.

And when you show a similar earnestness in the kingdom of God, the kingdom of God will be yours, and its rewards will be yours also.

The Way Commended.

This leads me to close, by calling your attention to the right *way* of seeking the Lord. You are to seek him in the forsaking of sin. The next verse to my text gives us that idea: "Let the wicked for-

sake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Assuredly the prodigal may come home, but he must leave the swine behind him. He may come with his tattered garments, and with the stench of the pigsty on his faded robe, but the pigs he leaves behind. You must forsake your sins. Your heart must be washed and cleansed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. How our hearts ache, as we think of the Thaw trial in our courts! If only those men had become Christians when they were boys! Oh, the sorrow, the heartache, which ungodly boys cause their mothers! Think of that white-haired mother, in trying to save her boy's life, revealing her heart, telling her family secrets! It is enough to make an angel weep! Sinners are selfish; they are brutal. Godless boys are willing to break their mothers' hearts, and bring their fathers' gray hairs down with sorrow to the grave. If a man had a spark of manliness in him, he would live a decent life, and not break his mother's heart, and not dishonor his family name, and not suffuse the cheeks of his sisters with shame. You boys that are unconverted, and are going out into the world without God and without hope, may bring equal sorrow to your families.

2 You are to seek the Lord also with your whole heart. Some seek God with a divided heart. The promises of God are very full and very precious

just at that point—"When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." "Blessed are they that seek me with the whole heart." "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Blessed is the man who can say, "My heart is fixed, O God." You can trust that man; he will amount to something; but when a man is drawn this way by the world, and that way by Christ, the Apostle James says of him, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." Men never win in life except their heart is fixed. Why did Ericsson win? His heart was fixed. See him in a bathroom, constructing a plan for a screw-propeller. Look at Edison, studying his first lessons, when he was a newsboy on the New York Central road. See Faraday, son of a blacksmith, writing to Sir Humphry Davy, asking for employment, and Sir Humphry put him to washing bottles. And of him, Tyndall finally said, "He is the greatest experimental philosopher the world has ever known." His heart was fixed.

Ericsson
Edison
Faraday

And so I close by urging you to begin to-day by casting yourself fully upon God through Jesus Christ. It may be your last chance, man. Disraeli spoke a great truth when he said, "The secret of success in life is for a man to be ready for his opportunity." I would like to speak to you in this closing half-minute, as if I might never speak to you again. Will you seek God just now? Come

just as you are; come just now in your helplessness. Too long you have waited; delay no longer. Seek the Lord now, for now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.

XII

THE PERVASIVE LEAVEN

Text: Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.—Matt. 13 : 33.

OUR Lord was the world's greatest teacher. Never did men speak more wisely than did his enemies when they said, "Never man spake like this man." The whole world has been sitting for two thousand years at the feet of Jesus Christ and learning of him. Men are never prepared to walk the dizzy heights of intellectual greatness until they have sat in lowly reverence at the feet of the world's great Teacher.

A book has recently been published which attempts to show that Christ visited India, and spent eighteen years there, the period between his visit to the temple at twelve and his baptism. The writer affirms that Christ studied philosophy among the sages of India. This author conclusively shows that there was a great commerce between Europe and Palestine on the one hand, and India on the other hand; that fact no one denies. But he is very weak when he comes to the supposed proofs that

Christ ever visited India. We are not at all unwilling to accept the statement, if only it can be proved that Christ did visit India. Whatever light from science and philosophy there was in India emanated from Christ. He is the light of the world; and every ray that shone into the mind of Socrates, or Plato, or Buddha, or Confucius, or Zoroaster, came from him who is the Sun of the moral universe, and the Light of the world. Jesus Christ is, as the Germans say, "*Der Einzige,*" the Unique. He stands alone among the world's great teachers. To-day science and philosophy are coming to sit at his feet. To-day the foremost thinkers along the lines of sociology are only attempting to approach the Sermon on the Mount. There is not to-day in any country, or in any science or philosophy, a man who can be considered as foremost in his department of thought who is opposed to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

He did not introduce the teaching of parables. He did, however, in this chapter, introduce the parabolic method of instruction, so far as his own public teaching was concerned. As this chapter gives us the first examples in Christ's teaching of the use of parables, so it gives us the largest number of parables found in any one chapter; we have nowhere else "so many and so costly pearls strung upon a single thread." The entire scene is strikingly beautiful. Here we have seven parables; four of them spoken while our Lord sat in the boat on the beau-

tiful sea of Galilee, the most honored sheet of water on this globe; and three spoken to a smaller circle of the disciples in his own home.

I shall set aside all discussion of the mere machinery of the parable, and proceed to the truths taught in the text.

Religion an External Force.

Your attention is therefore called, in the first place, to the fact that religion is an *external* force introduced into our life. The woman *took,* as we are told, the leaven and hid it in three measures of meal. True religion is not a philosophy; it is a revelation. It is not an evolution; it is primarily an involution. True religion is the gift of God—"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall *give* him"; the water of life is the gift of God. After we have partaken thereof, it is within us as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. True religion is, in its beginning in individual experience, an external bestowment. Men cannot by anything that is within them inherently develop the noblest character and the greatest likeness to Jesus Christ. No man can lift himself except he lay hold of something without himself. No man can lift himself by the straps of his boots. The more he lifts upward, the more he necessarily presses downward. In order that a man may lift himself, he must lay hold on some force without himself. It thus comes to pass that, when men are conscious of their weak-

ness, and lay hold on Christ, he lifts them above themselves, above their environment, above all earthly things. The woman *took* the leaven from without, and hid it in three measures of meal.

Religion a Hidden Force.

I proceed to say, in the second place, that religion thus received becomes an *internal* force. The woman hid the leaven within the meal. The world, even to-day, does not fully recognize the presence of this divine force in human society. The great world of classic Greece and Rome seemed strangely unconscious of the new force introduced into the life of the time by Jesus Christ. Nothing more surprises a student of that early day than to read the great writers and observe their utter silence regarding the kingdom of God. How can you account for that silence? Here was a force introduced into Greek and Roman society which was utterly to revolutionize its philosophy, its science, and its religion. Here was a force which was to shed a brighter glory on the Acropolis than ever flashed forth from Parnassus. Here was a force that was to give greater eloquence than was ever heard from any Greek *bema*. Here was a new science which was to revolutionize every colony of Rome, and finally overturn the throne of the Cæsars; yet the great classical writers were apparently almost ignorant of the fact. Some of them did, indeed, refer to Christ, calling him *Chrestus;* but they referred to him in a vague,

indefinite, and very inadequate manner. It seems impossible to account for their ignorance of this new force that had been introduced into their civil, social, intellectual, and religious life. It was a force that not only changed their government, their science, their philosophy, and their religion; but it changed their language and their literature. Here was a divine power put into the old linguistic skin-bottles, and it burst them. It was a force which gave a new meaning to the words that were employed, when it did not create new words.

The student of language will find no more fruitful field for his inquiries than the study of the changes in meaning that came to Greek and Latin words, as the result of this new leaven that was put into the linguistic meal. Take the word "love," as given us by the New Testament writers. There is no word in all Greek literature with the exact meaning of this word. A new word had to be coined, or a new meaning had to be injected into an old word, to express the nobler, sublimer, and diviner thought of Christianity. Jesus Christ revolutionized architecture, law, philosophy, science, government, literature, and language. Read the early Latin hymns. They possess a rhythm, a sonorousness, a majesty, a sublimity not found in other literature of the time; and all these characteristics are fragrant with Christian thought. It is not too much to say that the leaven of Christ, introduced into the linguistic meal of Greek and Latin thought, revolutionized

both languages. Where these early Christian writers could find a word into which they could inject the new thought, they employed it; when they could not find a word large enough to hold the new wine of the kingdom of God, they made a new word. Here was a new and majestic force that was injected into, and hidden in, all the life of that time; and yet these far-seeing, these philosophical thinkers did not discover the presence of this new force. If they did discover it, they minimized it; or they tried to deny its presence, and its power, and yet it revolutionized both Greece and Rome. It finally revolutionized the barbarians who conquered Rome.

Permeating and Transforming Power.

I beg you to observe, as the third thought suggested by this text, that true religion is a *pervasive* and *transforming* power. The kingdom of Christ, in its inception and insignificance, was like the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, yet that stone ground to powder all opposing powers. The kingdom of Christ is represented as a grain of mustard seed, which is indeed the smallest of all seeds, but which afterward becomes a tree, in the branches of which the birds may lodge. The kingdom of Christ is dominating the world to-day as never before since the Christ was born. It is marvelously interesting, and it is profoundly instructive to see how the kingdom of Christ and the truth of that kingdom are injecting themselves into the think-

ing of men to-day. Here has arisen a class of men, in our own country and in other countries, who have denied the Virgin birth of Jesus Christ; but they have not removed difficulties by their denial. They are involved in greater difficulties because of their denial. They have not rid history of the Christ. How shall they account for Jesus Christ? I find it easier to accept the evangelical record of his birth than to attempt to account for his life, if I deny that record. Here is the *"Der Einzige";* here is the unique One of the world. Account for him. You cannot account for him by heredity, you cannot by environment, you cannot by education; so far as we know, he never sat at the feet of the sages of India, or at the feet of the philosophers of Greece or of Rome. It is much more likely that the light that shone in India emanated from Zion's hill than the reverse. How shall you account for Jesus Christ? Here is a stream that flowed higher than any other stream that ever flowed through the human race. Water cannot rise higher than its source. I am utterly unable to account for the height to which that stream flowed, except as I go back and discover its source in the heart of God. The unicity of Christ's life demands a corresponding unicity in Christ's birth. Admitting the uniqueness of the birth, I find it easy to account for the uniqueness of the life.

But just at this time, when men are denying the possibility of the Virgin birth, science steps forward

and suggests to us the new science known as "parthenogenesis." I know that scientific men are not yet fully agreed regarding the possibilities of this new science. For myself, I have not a particle of doubt but that science will demonstrate, before many decades shall pass, the marvelous possibilities of parthenogenesis. These possibilities have been demonstrated already in certain lower forms of life; they will be demonstrated later in higher forms of life, in all probability. What are called miracles are only miracles in our thought. To God's thought, nothing is natural as opposed to supernatural, or supernatural as opposed to natural. To God's thought, all things are natural, or supernatural, as you may choose to select your terminology. It is only we who use these terms. The term supernatural is not biblical; the opposite to natural in the Bible is spiritual, not supernatural. The supernatural may be *over* the natural, *super,* but is not *against,* not *contra* natural.

A few years ago, we would have deemed talking from New York to Chicago by the long distance telephone as utterly supernatural. Why? Because we did not know the laws of nature that are involved in such communication. We have discovered laws of nature which, a few years ago, we did not know. He would be a very rash man who would say that we know all the laws of nature to-day. God has much more light yet to break forth from his Book, and God has much more light to break forth

from his other great book, which we call Nature. Revelation is God's written Bible; Nature is God's unwritten bible. They are both God's Bibles. In revelation the light is brighter, the voice is simpler and plainer and sweeter; but it is only one voice from whichever book that voice proceeds. Be patient, be trustful, be hopeful. Jesus Christ will not be dethroned. Jesus Christ rules the world to-day, and will continue to rule the world in all future years.

Just when men denied the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body, science came forward modestly offering her proofs as to the truth of both. There was a time when science was defiant, agnostic, even atheistic. There may be scientists still who are agnostic and atheistic; but there are other scientists who are theistic and even Christic. There is a whole school of scientists earnestly at work to establish, if possible, from a scientific point of view, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and of the resurrection of the body. Some of us, perhaps, do not need the demonstrations of these scientists; others do need them and will accept them. These men are trained scientists, with keen perception, and with inspiring ambition to discover these great truths, and to establish them by demonstrations of science. Here is a hidden force at work, a new leaven, the leaven of a Christic science to establish Christian truth. And the great world of agnosticism is ignorant of these facts, just as ignorant as

the great world of Greece and Rome was ignorant in the early day regarding this new force that had entered into the social, the philosophical, the literary, and the religious life of the time.

Religion a Dominant Force.

Observe, as I close, that this new force is to be *dominant* and finally *triumphant*—"till the whole was leavened." You see the pervasive character of the leaven is seen in that it touches the meal contiguous to its particles, and this meal is transformed into leaven, and it goes on touching all the other particles of meal contiguous to itself. There can be no finer illustration of the spirit of Christianity than that here indicated.

That is a marvelous inscription on a mosque in Damascus, as I reminded some of you on another occasion. Damascus, you know, is supposed to be, and it probably is, the oldest city in the world. There, in a great quadrangle, is a superb mosque. It is larger than the mosque of Omar in Jerusalem. It was once a Christian church, but was transformed, like St. Sophia in Constantinople, into a Mohammedan mosque. Strangely enough, the inscription over one of the principal doors has been allowed to remain. The inscription is this: "Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." Is not that a remarkable inscription to be on a Mohammedan mosque? All the discoveries of science

and art are making the fulfilment of that prophecy believable. There never was a time when discoveries reached into all departments of human thought tinctured with the spirit of Christ as to-day. All art, in its noblest forms, is Christian; all music, in its most enduring elements, is Christian. But for Christ, there would be no Bach, no Beethoven, no Haydn, no Handel, and no Mendelssohn. But for Christ there would have been no Canova, no Angelo, no Raphael. But for Christ there would have been no St. Peter's, no St. Paul's. But for Christ, no Shakespeare, no Milton, no Tennyson, no Browning, no Longfellow, no Lowell. But for Christ there would be no telegraphs, no railways, no steamships, no wireless telegraphy. But for Christ there would be no employed electricity. Electricity is a spark from the eternal Flame; electricity is a messenger from God's throne; electricity is a flash from God's face. It is God's hand that touches the button of the universe. There never was a time when these elements were so numerous and impressive as to-day. Christianity is to spread from pole to pole. There are no closed gates in Tibet, and no sealed doors in Africa. In 1857, an East India Company director said that he would rather welcome the devil than a missionary in India. That kind of directors are all dead to-day, thank God! They were fools when they were alive. The men of China, and India, and Africa all uncovered their heads, at the the same moment, when President McKinley's body

was laid in the grave. God has made the world a whispering gallery; he has made it resplendent with his glory, and vocal with his praise.

King William IV died in 1837, and it was thirty-five days before America knew that he was dead. Queen Victoria died in 1901, at 2.30 in the afternoon, and that evening there were pages in the New York papers on her beautiful character and her noble life. In 1859, it took one hundred and forty-seven days to go from New York to Shanghai; now we go in twenty-five days. A generation and a half ago we were all reading Jules Verne's book, "Around the World in Eighty Days." It seemed marvelous; it seemed Utopian. Now, since the Siberian railway has been completed, we can go around the world in thirty-three days and a half. The Burmese Irawadi will soon see railways on its shores, which will carry us to Bhamo and to Mandalay. Now you go by rail from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and from Damascus to Beirut. Soon you will go by rail from Damascus to Mecca, to Nineveh, where Jonah preached, and to Babylon, where Nebuchadnezzar set up his great image. These are marvelous days in which to be alive. You can go now from Glasgow to Stanley Falls in twenty-three days. On the twenty-sixth of January, 1885, after holding back the infuriated hordes for over ten months for reenforcements, which were within two days' march of the place, "Chinese" Gordon died, a martyr, at Khartum. To-day, you go from Cairo to Khartum,

five hundred and seventy-five miles, on a railway train with sleeping and dining cars.

God is revolutionizing this world in the interest of Jesus Christ. Wireless telegraphy! I stand in awe of the wonders of the Almighty. Forward, O Jesus Christ, crowned King, triumphant Nazarene, diademed Immanuel! O give us a place in lowly reverence at thy feet, and then give us a place to work in humble willingness in thy vineyard; and then, at the last, with eternal joy may we cast our crowns before him, our Lord!

XIII

THE FIVEFOLD WELCOME

Text: And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. —Luke 15: 20.

THIS text is taken from a parable which has been justly called the crown and pearl of all the parables of our Lord.

In the East, story-telling is a remarkably skilful art. The moment you land at Tangier, you begin to see and hear the story-tellers of the Orient. They stand on street corners and rehearse the news of the day. The people are not readers to any great degree. They have not a daily newspaper; and there is thus an immediate and important sphere for the story-teller. In addition, these professional story-tellers rehearse chapters in the early history of the country, of the tribe, or of the nation, to which most of the auditors belong.

We can well understand how Homer recited the "Iliad," because of the examples of somewhat similar recitations in our day. I frequently heard my father say that when he was a boy in the Highlands of Scotland, story-tellers went from house

to house, reciting their weird tales. Many of them recited in Gaelic; some of them recited in English. The poems of Ossian became familiar to many because of the recitations of these bards. Sometimes they recited original poems, but oftener they repeated the poems of others. They always had large and interested audiences. The result was that in that day in Scotland, and to this day in many parts of the Orient, story-telling is an art most skilfully cultivated. In our Lord's time the same method of imparting knowledge was practised. He surpassed all others in his parables; they are simply matchless. Lord Macaulay said of Bunyan's "Holy War" that it would have been the noblest and sublimest allegory ever written, had Bunyan not written "The Pilgrim's Progress." Only Bunyan could surpass Bunyan; only Christ can match Christ; and of all his parables, all his stories, there is no one so beautiful rhetorically and so instructive spiritually as the parable usually known as "The Prodigal Son." The name is somewhat unfortunate. The title ought to be "The Lost Son." Then the title would be in harmony with the titles of the two preceding parables, "The Lost Sheep" and "The Lost Coin"; thus "The Lost Son" would give us a triad of parables of similar titles. That title also would be in harmony with the words of the father at the close of the parable, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

I know no portion of the New Testament which

gives us so winsome a picture of God. Some medieval painters have dared attempt portraits of God; many of you will recall in European galleries such portraits; others of you, who may not have seen the originals, have seen copies of those reprehensible originals. To me such an attempt is well-nigh blasphemous. It is abominable in art, and it is worse in religion than it is in art. God has been represented by those artists as an aged, reverend-looking man, face, hair, and beard corresponding to the conception of him as extremely old. The whole conception is so repugnant to me that I can scarcely control my emotions while I am uttering these sentences.

But I stand here to-day to say that medieval theologians have painted pictures of God more abominable than those painted by medieval artists. They have done God unspeakable injustice. If they are now in God's presence, I hope God has forgiven them for the untruthful pictures of him which they have given in books on theology, books which have been taught in theological seminaries and reproduced in pulpits in many parts of the world. These writers carried over into theology the ideas that men of the time entertained regarding the Roman government. Augustine made God a gigantic, colossal, tyrannical Cæsar. One recognizes the noble elements in Augustine's conversion, and in the consecration of his great powers of mind and of soul to the service of God; but one cannot help seeing

how he was influenced by his political environment, and by all the conditions of thought and life of his time. He took the Roman Cæsar and lifted him up to the throne of the universe and called him God. He has given us a God who is often a brutal tyrant and a cruel monster. John Calvin followed, in important respects, in the line marked out by Augustine. Some of Calvin's principles, carried to their logical conclusion, make God a monster of such cruelty that he ought to be named Satan and not God. Teaching these conceptions of God, preachers have often multiplied agnostics and atheists.

Men sometimes sing, "The old-time religion is good enough for me." I would like to know what old-time religion they mean. I declare to you, before God, the old-time religion is not good enough for me, unless you have a religion that is older than the old-time religion which is generally meant when that wretched doggerel is sung. We want the religion of Christ, the religion of the New Testament, the religion of the apostles, and not the religion of men of the time of Augustine, and Calvin, and certain others of a later and still others of an intervening period. We say, without fear of contradiction, even although the language seems harsh, their principles have often made God a monster, a tyrant, a peculiarly fiendish demon. Rather than believe in such a God, I would believe that there is no God.

Some of the ideas of that medieval and later time

have been perpetuated. Only last week I met a woman who expressed the idea that if her babe had not some drops of water sprinkled upon its forehead, it would be damned forever. Can any man believe in a God who would do that? Why should man or woman be so ignorant, so superstitious, so wicked, as to believe that of God? I told her that her babe had no more conscious sin, no more penal guilt, than a rose or a lily. To-day the world is full of otherwise intelligent men and women who believe such awful superstitions regarding God. I repeat, they make God a monster of iniquity.

Over against such superstitions perpetuated by ignorant monks of the Middle Ages, I present the picture of God painted by Christ in this parable. There is a God at whose feet we this morning fall in reverent adoration. There is a God whose kiss we want on our cheek. Did not Christ know God? Did not Christ dwell in the bosom of the Father? Was not one purpose of Christ's earthly mission to proclaim God? Did he not stand before his partially informed and greatly hesitating disciples and say, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father?" Did he not distinctly declare that one purpose which he sincerely cherished, and which he constantly illustrated, was to declare God unto men?

The Eyes of Love.

In the first place, I emphasize God's *eyes* of love: "But when he was yet a great way off, his father

saw him"—God's eyes of love. Wonderful is this picture in all its parts. We have the son's almost insolent demand of his father and the father's compliance with that demand, because the son's heart already was alienated from the home and from the father. The son's departure is full of suggestion. For a time all was merry with him as a marriage bell; money was abundant, friends were numerous, life was gay. But now all is gone; money gone, friends gone, health gone, hope gone, everything gone. Oh, that he had come back home then! That was God's call to him to come home; but instead, like sinners of to-day, he went down still further. He joined himself—the literal translation of the word is, he "pinned" himself, he "glued" himself—to a citizen of that country; and that citizen sent him out to feed swine. Here is a boy who would not stay in his father's home, and he is now a swineherd; here is a son who refused his father's love, and now he has swine for his companions! The man who will turn away from God, will end with swinish men and women. There is no hope for you, if you persist in turning away from God; you will inevitably bring up with swine.

The young man now realizes his condition and determines to return. He starts. I observe that he does not bring the swine with him. He came just as he was, in his filth, in his rags, and with the odor of the pigsty; but he left the hogs behind him. You will have to leave the swine of sinful

habits behind you when you come to God. The filth of the swine is on you; you may come with it, but you must leave the swine themselves behind you.

We may imagine that his father often went up to the roof of his house, and earnestly looked out over the fields to see if his boy would come back. We may imagine that the servants often saw him, and they whispered to one another, "Poor master! His heart is on that wandering boy; he cannot forget him." The servants turned away and pretended not to see him. They knew too well what it meant. But one day, while he is watching from the roof of the house, away yonder in the dim distance he descries some one coming. Only a father's eyes would know this boy as his own; his feet are bleeding, his face is stained with tears, his fine robes are tattered, his once lofty head is bowed, his once supple form is stiffened, and he is making his way laboriously home; but his *father* saw *him*.

Let me emphasize two words in that clause. First, he saw *him*, that very boy; he instantly recognized him. For the moment, his thought went out to no other. He had another son, off in the fields, who was sober, steady, industrious, and prosperous. But, for the moment, he forgot that son entirely. The shepherd left the ninety and nine, and went off after the sheep that was lost. The woman had nine other coins; but in that darkened hovel of hers, she sweeps the clay floor, seeking for the coin that was lost.

And this father's thought is on that wandering boy. I beg you also to observe that we ought to emphasize the word *father*—"his *father* saw him." It was the love of a father that went out after that boy. He never ceased to love him. Perhaps the mother was dead. It is not always possible for a parable to go on all-fours, as we say; and the mother for some reason is left out. Yet I find in this father a suggestion of the mother's tenderness.

I find in God both father and mother. "Like as a father pitieth his children" . . . "as one whom his mother comforteth." God is both father and mother, and some of you boys and girls have turned away from him! Why do you treat God so? Off up in your country home is your father, and yonder is your mother; perhaps you have partly forgotten both since you have lived in the city. But you have forgotten God more completely than you have forgotten your earthly father and your earthly mother. God's eyes are on you. His eyes were on you last night. Where were you last night? What were you doing last night? God saw you; God heard you. Your mother did not; I am glad she did not. Your father did not; I am glad he did not. I heard of a boy becoming a terrible prodigal a few weeks ago, and my first thought was, "How glad I am, his father and mother are both dead." He would have broken their hearts. You are breaking God's heart by your waywardness, by your neglect of him, and by living with swine.

THE HEART OF LOVE.

I beg to call your attention also to the *heart* of love—"his father saw him, and had *compassion*" on him. A wonderful word is our English word, "compassion." It is made up of two Latin words, just as our word "sympathy" is made up of two Greek words; and the words compassion and sympathy mean exactly the same thing. The thought in the one case is expressed in Latin forms, and in the other case in Greek forms. It means suffering together with, it means fellow-feeling; this is here a very strong expression. Love always implies the possibility of sorrow. Love is the mother of joy, and love is the mother of pain. Pain and pleasure are twin children of mother-love. Every child born into a home is a new fountain of joy; every child is also an additional care and responsibility. Every father and mother can understand the meaning of this statement, "and had compassion" on him; this is the translation of a strong Greek word. You suffer more because of your wandering child than the child suffers. You bear the sickness of your children ten times over; you would die for your child. And do you think you are more loving than God? When I think of my love for my children, I am ashamed of myself. As moonlight is to sunlight, and as water unto wine, so is my love to God's love. God's heart is out for you this morning. God is panting for you; he is yearning for you. Never did

a mother yearn over an absent child as God yearns over you to-day.

THE FEET OF LOVE.

Permit me, in the next place, to call your attention to the *feet* of love—he "ran." Go back again to that home, and see the father on that roof. He has caught sight of the coming boy. The stairway is on the outside of the house. Travelers in Palestine to this day often climb up on a stairway on the outside of the house to go to an upper room. The father saw him, and down those stairs he came. He forgets his age, he forgets his infirmity, he forgets his dignity. The servants see him, and say: "Why, look at master! What has happened? We never saw him run so before. We never saw him so forget the dignities and proprieties of his position and the infirmities of his age as he is doing to-day. Why is it?" And they guess at once that that wandering boy must be coming. Away the father runs. The regular road makes a curve; but there is a short cut across the lot, and there is a gap in the hedge, and away he goes over the lot, and leaps through the hedge, forgetting his age, going with all his soul after that lost boy.

I wish sometimes the church could forget its dignity. Some church officers and pastors seem to think that they are set for saving the conventionalities of the church life and pulpit dignity. They ought to know that a church is set for saving men;

that is the only purpose for which a church exists in this world. Some churchmen have certain traditional rules about their church roll, and if a man does not come up to these traditional standards, they are ready to strike his name off the roll. The church exists to save men. If you can save a man by holding on to him and going after him, in God's name, hold on to him and go after him, whatever may happen to your church roll! "The feet of love"—our dear young people illustrated this truth last Sunday afternoon in making hundreds of calls on our church people in the vicinity of our mission. I have had direct reports from many of those calls. Young women and young men went into scores of homes. What surprises they met! What warm receptions they met also! Perhaps, in some few cases, they met with coldness. Never mind; you could not be hurt, because you were there to represent your Master.

How to-day I would love to find you for Christ! To-day I would go after you on my knees, if I could win you to Christ! I would rather never preach again, ending my ministry with this sermon, than live on and not see Christians built up in their most holy faith, and the unconverted brought to Jesus Christ. I would rather that my tongue should cleave to the roof of my mouth, than that I should have its use and not employ it to honor God and to save men. Oh, that God would give every member of this church the feet of love!

THE ARMS OF LOVE.

I want you to notice also the *arms* of love—he "fell on his neck." Would not any father do it? I told you last Sunday night of what I tried to do some years ago for a wandering boy for his father's sake. He was the filthiest young man who ever crossed the threshold of my home. I sent him to the bathroom. I clothed him from head to foot. I took his clothes with a pair of tongs and threw them into the furnace fire. I did it for his father's sake. I loved his father when I was a young man, as I never loved a young man up to that time in my life, and God used me to lead his father to Christ, the first person in whose conversion God used me. And this was his boy. I did it for his father's sake. Would not he have done more for his boy than I did? I could not bear to touch his clothes, except with a pair of tongs. But his father would have put his arms around that boy; and do you think that his father is more loving than is God? O come to-day to God's heart!

THE KISS OF LOVE.

And so I close with the *kiss* of love—"and kissed him." There was not a clean spot, I imagine, on that boy's cheek. There were germs enough to inoculate the whole family, I am sure, according to our modern theories. Do you think the father stopped to talk about germs? "Here is my boy; he

was lost; he is found. He was dead; he is alive again. Let me kiss him for his own sake, and for his mother's sake, and for my sake." That kiss meant much; it meant forgiveness; it meant reconciliation; it meant a welcome; and thus we have a fivefold welcome by the father to this wandering boy.

Away yonder among the swine, the boy conned over what he was going to say when he would get to his father. You remember what he thought he would say: "I will say this to father, when I see him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.'" Now he has come. Now his father's arms are about his neck, and his father's kiss is on his cheek. Do you think he will ever get through that sentence which away off in the far country he had proposed to utter? He begins it. He gets on reasonably well for a time. He says, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." There he stopped! He never said, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." Why? Two reasons may be given. First, the sense of sonship was coming back, the assurance of forgiveness was in his heart; and, just then, before he reached that part, his father's voice was heard saying to the servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and

kill it; and let us eat and be merry." That whole scene Christ lifts to heaven. Hear Christ's own sweet words: "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Come home to your Father's house, and to your Father's heart now, and give the angels cause to sing a sweeter song and to experience a higher joy because one more sinner has repented.

XIV

THE INTERROGATIVE CONFESSION

Text: Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.—John 6 : 68.

THE question in the previous verse was asked by our Lord in view of the defection of many disciples. They were merely formal disciples; they followed Christ partly because of the loaves and the fishes. You will observe, by the preceding verses, that Christ erected a very high standard of Christian living. The moment these followers discovered the test which he thus applied, they wavered in their attachment, and some of them turned away from following him further. Our Lord was peculiarly sensitive to the treatment which he received from men. He was the most perfect gentleman civilization has yet produced. He was the ideal Man of the human race. His soul was poetic; his nature was esthetic; his heart was immaculate. Never was there a man, before or since, who had so exquisite an appreciation of what is decorous between man and man, and between all men and himself; and when these disciples left off following him, his heart was deeply touched. There is great

tenderness in his question, as he turned to the twelve disciples and asked, "Will ye also go away?" The pronoun *ye* in the Greek is emphatic; it puts the true followers in strong contrast with those who were then going away. Christ was genuinely human while he was gloriously divine. There is an unspeakable pathos in his words when elsewhere he said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." He was houseless, homeless, and often friendless. Jesus Christ on the earth was a prince in exile; he was the King of glory, absent from his palace and from his throne. He had times of unspeakable longing for home. As he met the rebuffs, taunts, and scorn of men, homesickness often filled his soul. Voluntarily he became man, submitting to the limitations and humiliations of his earthly conditions; and there were times when he was distinctly and deeply conscious of those humiliations and limitations.

The question has often arisen as to whether or not our Lord really had any fear that these disciples intended to abandon his service. The true answer to that question seems to be that they were in danger of being swept away by the rising tide of unbelief, just as men are in danger to-day from the rising tide of historic criticism, and other forms of inquiry. In common with others, they saw that all their earthly hopes of a temporal kingdom were taken away by Christ's declaration of the spiritual-

ity of the kingdom which he came to establish. The predominant idea of his question was one of tender solicitude; and his words must have had an influence in restraining the action of his disciples, did they contemplate abandoning his service.

Peter becomes the mouthpiece of all the disciples. He was always ready to speak. An old writer quaintly says that Peter had not more of the ear of Christ than the other disciples had, but he had more of a tongue of his own. We may well ask, where else could they go, did they leave Christ? Where else can we go? Peter knew not; you know not; and I know not. Christ alone has the words of eternal life. His words were life-giving. He was, he is, the Fountain of life. Could they go to the scribes? Could they go to the Pharisees? They were blind leaders of the blind. Could they go back to Moses? That would be turning away from the sun in its meridian splendor to the gray dawn of the morning. Would they go to John the Baptist? John the Baptist was only a voice, telling us of Jesus the Christ. John the Baptist found his highest honor and his greatest glory in saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" Where could they go? To the world? To sin? To Satan? If you turn away from Christ, to whom or to what will you go?

I have often found it of great advantage in determining my course of conduct, to ask myself this question, "If I do not this, what then shall I do?

What course shall I pursue, if I do not adopt this course?" So the question became a very practical one for these disciples; it is an equally practical one for us now. Men are still asking this question; and to it various answers are given. I wish to speak of some of the answers that occasionally are given. It has been my rule all through the years to preach down error, if possible, by preaching up truth, rather than by attacking error directly. I shall not this morning depart from my usual method, although I shall give you some side glances at error, while we are preaching up the truth. I allude to these errors in the spirit of the poet Aaron Hill, who said:

> Tenderhearted stroke a nettle,
> And it stings you for your pains;
> Grasp it like a man of mettle,
> And it soft as silk remains.

Shall You Go to Atheism?

Shall we go to atheists and *Atheism?* You must go somewhere. Shall we go to atheism? What is atheism? Look at the composition of the word. It comes from *a,* or *alpha,* privative, and *theos,* God. Many definitions of atheism have been given. Atheism meant one thing at one time, and another thing at another time. Among the early Greeks, atheism meant disbelief in the gods of heathen mythology. Socrates was called an atheist because he dared question the existence of these mythological deities. In the early days of Christianity, many Christians

were called atheists by the heathen, because they repudiated heathen deities. What definition shall we give of atheism at this moment? I would say that atheism is any system of opinion which leads to the denial of the existence of God, as a living, personal Being, and as the Creator, Ruler, and Lord of the world. In its scientific aspect, I think there are no atheists. Scientific atheism is practically dead; it is as extinct as the "dodo." I do not know to-day in any literature, the literature of science or philosophy or theology, a great thinker who is a scientific atheist. The day of scientific atheism is past; I doubt much whether it will ever return. But, in its practical aspect, atheists abound. Practically any man is an atheist who lives without God, who lives as if there were no God. Practical atheism is common, is dangerous, is deadly. Bacon has well said, "A little philosophy inclineth men's minds to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds to religion." Literally true also is the observation of Plato in his "Laws," when he says that, "Atheism is a disease of the soul before it becomes an error of the understanding." Men become atheistic in heart, before they become even agnostic in head. According to the psalmist, it was a fool who said, "no God." The fool also said this in his heart; for the head even of a fool knew better. There are many men who live as if God were dead. If it could be authoritatively announced at twelve o'clock to-day that God was dead, no change would these

men make in their modes of thought or their methods of life. They rise from their beds, and they seek their beds, and they eat their food, and they attend to their business, as if there were no God. God is not in their thoughts; he is not in any of their ways. For them, to all intents and purposes, there is no God. This is a terrible picture of life. This conception of life takes away from us all that is above us to excite our awe and to evoke our adoration; it takes away from us all that is around us that is dearest in life, to awake our tenderness and to educe our affection. I beseech you, men and women, that you go this morning to Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Saviour. If you have not already gone to him, you are living without God, without hope, and without the highest and divinest life. To whom shall you go? To Jesus Christ. He alone has the words of eternal life.

Shall You Go to Materialism?

Shall you go to *Materialism?* Materialism has many forms. Its lowest form is that which identifies mind with matter, and thought with motion. It is thus the twin brother of atheism. It must ever be so. He who denies the existence of God, must deny the spiritual personality of man. Atheism and materialism play into each other; practically they are one. Materialism is an old philosophical conception. We find it among the heathen of many types; we find it among the Sadducees in Christ's time.

Pantheists in ancient and in modern days are, to a greater or less degree, materialists. Materialism is the gospel of the flesh; it is, as Carlyle called it, the gospel of dirt. The moral of materialism is to produce plenty of phosphorus by good eating and good drinking; its practical suggestion is, "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." The lowest form of materialism is, according to the crude theories of Cabanis and Moleschott, that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. We are thus what we eat; we are animals. If we are only animals, and die as the beasts die, naturally we shall live as the beasts live. Here again I have to say, with sorrow, that many are practically materialists. They eat, drink, and live without thought of their spiritual natures, or of their relation to God. They devote all their energies to gain and to pleasure. They live for time and sense; they are under the tyranny of the present. Like Esau, they sell their spiritual and immortal birthright for a mess of pottage. They rob themselves of their highest honor. They take the crown of manhood from their brows, and hurl it in the mire, and then trample it therein. What shall you do? Go to Christ. He alone has the words of eternal life.

Shall You Go to Rationalism?

Shall you go to *Rationalism?* I have sometimes felt that the preachers whom I heard in early years did a great injustice to truth, because they were

always denouncing rationalism as opposed to religion. There is, indeed, a type of rationalism that is opposed to religion; it is a rationalism deduced from reason and opposed to revelation; it is an excessive deference to reason, but not reason in its highest form. True rationalism is in harmony with true religion. The irrational man is the irreligious man; the truly rational man is the genuinely religious man. Rationalism in religion has its place; religion may be above reason, but it is never contrary to reason. Religion is the highest reason. You climb the ladder of rationalism, round by round, until you reach its top, and then you reach out your hand in the dark; reason is unable to carry you farther, but there you can grasp the hand and hear the voice of God as your Friend, Saviour, and Father. Rationalism has its sphere, and within that sphere it is authoritative. I repeat, reason and faith are not antagonistic to each other. They are working toward the same end.

When the great tunnel of Saint Gothard was constructed, workmen bored simultaneously from either side of the Alps. For nearly ten years, they worked in the dark; but in 1881, one of the parties of workmen began to hear, through the lessening thickness of intervening rocks, the sounds of the hammer and the voices of the workmen from the other side. On they worked, listening, working, working, listening. One day they broke the intervening barrier down; men rushed from the other side, grasped

hands, and looked into each other's faces. They worked from opposite sides; but they were doing the same work. Precisely so is it with reason and faith; they are working from opposite sides toward the same end. It is a work of great spiritual engineering that brings these two sets of workmen, the disciples of reason and the disciples of faith, together in the heart of a mountain, or in the center of a tunnel, illumined by the light of Jesus Christ. Whither shall you go? To Jesus Christ, bringing all your rationalism that is true with you; for Christ alone has the words of the noblest rationalism and of eternal life.

Shall You Go to Agnosticism?

Whither shall you go? To *Agnosticism,* so some say. What is agnosticism? It is a theory of things which neither affirms nor denies the existence of God. It is the doctrine of nescience, or the theory which maintains that men cannot have any real knowledge of anything, but only impressions. With reference to theism, it is a condition of suspended judgment; it simply affirms that upon existing knowledge the being of God is unknown. Sometimes, the word agnosticism is equivalent to the belief that the being of God is not merely unknown, but is unknowable. What agnostics probably really mean, when they say that God is unknowable, is that God is unfathomable. It is true that, in the third century of church history, the term agnosticism was

used by a sect, implying that God did not know all things; but that use of the word is unknown now. Agnostics are numerous. There is a gnosticism which is condemnable; and there is an agnosticism which is commendable. But there is also a reprehensible agnosticism. Who first used the word agnostic? It is comparatively a new word. You will not find it in the older dictionaries. We have become so used to it now, that it is difficult for us to realize that it was unknown until a few years ago. Mr. Huxley, in his "Essays Upon Some Controverted Questions," tells us that almost all his colleagues in the philosophical society, to which he belonged, were "ists" of some sort; "and I, the man without a rag of a label, . . . took thought and invented what I conceived to be the appropriate title of 'Agnostic.' It came into my head as suggestively antithetic to the title 'Gnostic' of church history." We are thus indebted to him for this word. Regarding many things, every man is an agnostic. Regarding other things, all men are most joyously gnostic. Regarding still other things, a man may be neither a gnostic nor an agnostic. We may take refuge in another word recently coined, the word *merognostic*. Regarding certain things, a man may emphatically say I *know;* he can say with Job, "I *know* that my Redeemer liveth." He can say with the blind man, whose sight was restored by Christ, "I *know* that, whereas I was blind, now I see." He can say with Paul, "I *know* whom I have be-

lieved, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." He can say with the beloved John, "We *know* that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." In regard to all these things, one may be a gnostic. Regarding many other things, one has to be an agnostic. No man knows anything fully. I can *ap*prehend God; I cannot *com*prehend God. Tennyson was right when he said:

> Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies;
> I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower—but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is.

I cannot understand this rose all in all. How then can I understand you? How can I understand God? How can I comprehend God? But I can know, and I do know that God is my Father, that God is my Saviour, and that I am his redeemed child, born for eternity and on my way to his bosom; and all the skeptics in the universe cannot take that knowledge out of my soul.

I said a moment ago that there was recently coined a new word. It is a very suggestive word. Dr. Joseph Cook, when lecturing in Tremont Temple, Boston, used these words: "It is not true that we know everything, nor is it true that we know nothing. It is true that we know in part. Between

gnosticism and agnosticism stands the sound philosophy of knowing in part." He went from Boston to Princeton, New Jersey, and talking with Doctor McCosh, said: "I want a word. It is in no dictionary. I want a word to express the idea of knowledge between gnosticism and agnosticism, of knowing in part." Doctor McCosh thought a moment, and then, in his quaint Scotch brogue, he said: "Wait a bit, till I get my Greek Testament." And away he ran, and got his Greek Testament. He asked, "What did the Apostle Paul say about knowing in part?" He turned to First Corinthians, the thirteenth chapter and the twelfth verse, where the apostle says, "Now I know in part"; and he took the Greek word for *in part,* and the Greek word for *know,* and putting them together, he gave us the word "merognostic," descriptive of one who knows in part Every thoughtful man must be a merognostic. Some things he knows, and he would die for them; some things he does not know, and never can know. Some things he knows in part, and even this partial knowledge is peculiarly dear.

Shall You Go to Churchism?

Shall you go to *Churchism?* Those who are accustomed to hear me, know that I never make light of the church of God; on the contrary, I honor the church as the bride of Christ. But there is a dangerous churchism. There is in some creeds an undue exaltation of the church. The church is made

practically God. There is often a churchianity which is antagonistic to a true Christianity. The Roman Church is the most gigantic trust beneath God's heavens; it claims a monopoly of salvation. It distinctly affirms that outside its pale there is no salvation. It makes the church the fountain of saving grace, and it makes the priests the channels through which that grace flows. What is the distinctive element contradistinguishing true Protestantism from Romanism? I might mention the mass; in important respects, the mass is the soul of the Roman Church. In Romanism, and in some branches of Anglicanism, the church claims a monopoly of salvation, and divine grace can flow only through the priest, the sacraments, and other appointed channels. In true Protestantism, every penitent can cry out to God directly, as did the publican, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," irrespective of any church, and irrespective of all priests. Every soul having so cried out to God, may have the answer, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee; go in peace." I repudiate such churchism as would give any church and any priests a monopoly of salvation. Away with such churchism! To claim such a monopoly of salvation is to be guilty of sacrilege. Come immediately to Christ. He alone has the words of eternal life.

Men and women, whither shall you go? You must go somewhere. The soul needs help and hope and life. Mysteries surround us; dangers are near.

Whence came we? Whither go we? What are we? We want a man to sympathize with us, the Man, Christ Jesus. We want a God to succor us, the God-Man, Christ Jesus. We want one near enough to love us, and to let us love him. We want one far enough above us to help us, and to command our reverence and adoration. Oliver Wendell Holmes said truthfully:

> Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn;
> Our noontide is thy gracious dawn;
> Our rainbow arch, thy mercy's sign;
> All, save the clouds of sin, are thine.

Go now to Jesus Christ, that you may receive life eternal from him, its only and its divine source; to whom be glory now and evermore!

XV

THE DESPICABLE POSSIBILITY

Text: Or despise ye the church of God?—1 Cor. 2 : 22.

THIS text is connected with the account given by the Apostle Paul of the institution of the Lord's Supper, he having received his instructions by special revelation from the ascended Lord. The remarks, which limited time will permit to be made, will be along the line of the special needs and prospects of the church. In the church at Corinth, there had been introduced a service which was known as a love-feast; these love-feasts were the agapæ of the early church. Such services are still continued in some branches of the Methodist Episcopal Church in our own country. This was a common meal of which the people, rich and poor, high and low, partook previous to the reception of the Lord's Supper. They brought their own provisions with them. It was expected that the supply thus brought would be divided, so that the rich would not have an abundance, and so that the poor should not lack. The idea of such a feast was very beautiful: it might have been helpful to a remarkable degree. But it was a feast which was liable to great abuse, and, as a matter of fact, it was greatly abused. The rich

brought with them an abundance, and the poor had but little. The spirit of pride and of caste was speedily manifested. The rich ate by themselves; the poor were neglected. Many not only ate by themselves, but they indulged in wine to such an extent as to become drunken. The soul of the Apostle Paul was stirred to its depths; as a result, he writes in this letter with great warmth. You can see that as he writes his eye flashes and his cheek flushes; he asks, "What! Have ye not houses, in which to eat your common meal? Why will ye despise and dishonor the church? Why will ye despise so sacred a feast as that of the Lord's Supper?" In this feast they failed to discern the Lord's body; they profaned the Lord's Supper; and thus came the rebuke, and the rebuke was immediately followed by the instructions which the Apostle Paul so wisely gave. It is almost incredible that such scenes could have occurred in an apostolic church. On this occasion, a somewhat larger application is given to the apostle's words than perhaps he designed. It is possible for men and women to-day to despise the church of God. There are certain classes to whom this rebuke of the apostle must come.

The Service of God's House.

First, all those who fail to attend the service of God's house, in some degree despise the church of God. One is astonished to find whole families, not one of whose members ever attends a religious serv-

ice, except perhaps at a wedding or at a funeral. This remark applies to families, not only in the city, but in our country villages, and also in the farming communities. These men and women rob themselves of high and holy privileges. They are bringing up their families in an atmosphere devoid of the sacred experiences which come from listening to God's voice in his word, and from speaking to God in our prayers and praises. You ought to use your influence with men in business, and men and women in social life, who never attend God's house, to induce them to attend. You will be bringing blessing to them, and honor to God, and benediction to the church of God, if you can induce individual men and women, and especially whole families, to be attendants on the services in God's house.

Joining the Church.

Secondly, those who do not join the church of God also despise the church. In all congregations there are large numbers of noble men and beautiful women who are outside the church. They are brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law to the church; they ought to be brothers and sisters indeed in the church. The nobility of their character is not because they are outside the church, but in spite of being outside the church. They have, fortunately for themselves, lived within the circle of church life. They have breathed its atmosphere; they have, to some degree, caught its spirit; but they ought to be inside

the church. They have their criticisms to make of church-members. If they themselves have higher standards of Christian living, let them come into the church and illustrate those higher standards by their own Christian consistency and attainment. I reach out my hand to such this morning. Come with us, and with God's help, we will do you good. Cast in your life with the people of God. Be wholly on the side of Christ. If you are Christ's, march under the flag. If you are followers of the Lord, put on the Lord's uniform. Do not claim loyalty when you refuse to march with the Lord's army. If you have a right to stay out of the church, so have I; and if I have, so has the other man; and if he has, so has every man. Your action, if consistently followed, would blot out the church; there would be no church of God upon the earth, if all men did as you do. Is that the right position for you to take? What would this world become without the church of God? Do not, I beseech you, despise the church of God.

Not Contributing Means.

Thirdly, those who do not contribute of their means to the church of God are among the despisers of the church. One must speak the truth touching all these great obligations. It has recently been affirmed, in a responsible monthly review, that the salaries of Congregational ministers have suffered a decrease of ten per centum during the last decade. What is true of the clergy of this denomination is

probably true of the clergy of all the denominations. During this same period, the United States has enjoyed the greatest prosperity in the history of the country. During this same period, the income of trades and professions has not experienced any decrease; indeed, it has enjoyed an increase. During this same period, the cost of living has gone up greatly, and large numbers of clergymen are greatly embarrassed, although they do not desire to state the facts, by the smallness of their salaries. During this same period, the number of men studying for the Christian ministry has fallen off very considerably. High-minded young men, capable of making a great success in business and in law, are unwilling to enter the ministry to receive salaries on which they cannot respectably live. A steady decrease in salary, and a steady increase in cost of living, will inevitably prevent men from entering the Christian ministry. It will also lower the tone and depreciate the quality of the men who do enter the Christian ministry. There are clergymen who, without the slightest doubt, would have an income from fifty to one hundred thousand dollars a year in the legal profession, who have an income of twenty-five hundred or three thousand dollars in the Christian ministry. These men are sensitive, many of them are extremely sensitive; they are sore to the bottom of their hearts, because of the sacrifices which they and their families have to make, owing to the smallness of their salaries.

Paying a Debt.

Somehow, a few churchmen have learned to feel that giving to the church, and the cause of God generally, is payment of a debt. This is a curious fact in Christian life. We have thought of giving to the church as a gratuity, as an act of benevolence, as a manifestation of philanthropy, and not as the payment of a debt. When a physician's bill comes in, a lawyer's bill, a grocer's bill, we recognize the payment as the payment of a debt. But we have failed almost entirely to recognize our obligations to the church and to the kingdom of God as the payment of a debt. When a man rents a pew or takes a sitting, he feels, somehow, as if he were bestowing a charity, instead of paying a debt which he owes to the church and to God; and if it is necessary to economize, he will economize nowhere else, until he has economized on his payments for the support of the church. He will pay every other debt first, and then, at last and grudgingly, he will throw in his gratuity, as he deems it, to the church. These statements unfortunately are true; these errors ought to be rebuked; these wrongs ought to be corrected. Has not the time come when the emphasis that insists that a clergyman shall live a self-sacrificing life should be transferred, in its due proportion, to the laity as well? When a man spends ten to twenty-five thousand dollars on his family luxuries; and gives fifty or a hundred and fifty dollars for a pew,

is that a fair division? Is that an honest apportionment of his resources and expenditures? Are we not debtors to God as truly as we are debtors to men? Has not the time come when we ought to recognize that money given to the church of God is the payment of a debt which we owe to God and to the church? Why should the claims of God be the last we pay? Ought not pastors to urge these obligations on their people? Are we to limit the ministry to the sons of rich men, and so have ministers who can support themselves without salaries? It may be necessary to do so, if the reduction in salaries, which is now made in many churches, shall continue. Are ministers to be always called upon to make, far and away, the largest sacrifices in the support of the church? Are they to continue to be the largest givers at almost every offering that is made? Pastors known to me lead in every offering made in their churches for outside benevolence; they are also the largest pew-holders in the church. They should do their share, but must they do also the share of three or four others, any one of whom is abler than they?

Religious Work Costs Money.

It seems to be the plan of God that religious work must cost money. It is part of the purpose of God that character should be developed by giving money, and often by giving it at considerable sacrifice. Cost and worth are evermore close neighbors; work is

always the standard of value; labor determines worth. An ounce of gold is worth more than an ounce of lead, for no other reason in the world but that it costs more labor to secure an ounce of gold than an ounce of lead. If an ounce of gold could be secured for the same labor as an ounce of lead, it would be of no more value than an ounce of lead. Pebbles are valueless because it requires little labor to secure pebbles; diamonds are of extreme value because of the enormous amount of labor required to obtain diamonds. These great economic laws hold in all religious things. Cost and worth always go side by side. The site of a church costs so much per square foot. This Calvary Church property is worth one million, perhaps a million and a quarter, of dollars at this moment. The land on which this church and chapel stand, cost one hundred and sixty thousand dollars, a thousand dollars per linear foot, as nearly as it was possible to figure the cost at the time of the purchase. Buildings increase in cost as civilization progresses. Heating, lighting, repairs, insurance, these are all costly. Running expenses are as costly for churches as for halls and theaters of the same size and character. Who expects to have a sitting in a theater without paying for it? And yet it costs no more, or very little more, to conduct a theater than to conduct a church. Churches are never conducted for money; theaters are; and the patrons of the theater pay the money. You will pay in a single night in attendance at a theater, and

for the inevitable concomitants of that attendance, as much as you will give for a church sitting for a year; and yet, now and then, a man complains of the cost of a sitting in a church.

Running expenses, I say, as a rule, are as costly for churches as for halls and theaters. Coal bills are not very religious things; indeed, they are immensely secular, but they have to be paid with money. Trustees of churches give their time, their labor, and their thought, and give also largely of their money, as a service of love. We owe them an enormous debt. The deacons and trustees of this church stand around the minister as a body-guard, as fellow-workers, as beloved laborers together in the Lord. I have never had a serious criticism, in thirty-six years and a half, to make of a deacon or a trustee. They have, as a rule, been most loyal and most loving, and I am here to-day to bear my testimony to their fraternal affection and to their religious devotion. It must be remembered, in this connection, that coal bills are not remitted because the coal was bought for a church. In fact, men who sell coal expect the bills to be the more promptly paid, because they are contracted for a church. Who is to pay these bills? Officers of churches cannot pay them as if they were personal bills; the responsibility belongs to all those associated with a church. If a church meets in halls or meets in theaters, it will find that they also are costly; even tents cost money. I say, it seems to be the purpose of God,

in the development of his kingdom in this world, to necessitate the expenditure of money in order that his cause should advance. He might have ordered it otherwise; he does not seem to have chosen to make it otherwise. When pastors have to make enormous sacrifices to make up deficits for various causes, missionary and other, they lose heart and hope. They have to try to increase their income in some other way than by their salaries; they have to write newspaper articles; they have to go out as lecturers; they have to strive in various other ways to meet their responsibilities. Their salaries, depleted, have to be supplemented by many kinds of secular, or at least semi-secular, work. This is inevitable; and as a result, there may be neglect of pulpit preparation and pastoral duty. I suppose the average salary of ministers in several of the denominations in the State of New York, is not more than four hundred dollars a year, and I venture to say that the largest givers, in proportion to their incomes, in all the churches are the pastors. There is scarcely a day laborer who does not earn more money in a year than the average pastor in the State of New York. No wonder that virile, high-spirited, mettlesome young men hesitate about going into the Christian ministry. How can they support their families? Fortunately, now and then there is a man who can live independently of his salary. I could name some pastors who have given sums nearer two hundred thousand than one hundred thousand dol-

lars for the cause of God, during the period of their pastorate in New York. I have the exact figures. Some of these pastors have made enormous sacrifices.

Failure to Give Religious Influence.

Lastly, allow me also to say that those who fail to give their religious influence to the church, to some degree, despise the church of God. If we live inconsistent lives, we dishonor the church. Some members of the choir this morning have on their robes indications of their rank, tokens of their faithfulness. Professor Bowman said, when they put on the robe with this rank, "You will not dishonor your robe by failure to perform your duty." That robe and that rank will stimulate them to do their duty. Putting on the uniform of our country stimulates men to bravery. Always in the newspapers, when a policeman is found in any position that is disreputable, the paper adds, when the facts warrant the statement, "and with his uniform on." For a policeman to be guilty of a disreputable act without his uniform on is bad enough; but to be guilty while wearing his uniform is disgraceful to the last degree. When you put on the profession of faith in Jesus Christ, when you wear the robe of Christian profession, we have a right to demand that you will not dishonor the church, that you will not despise the Lord who has bought you with his own most precious blood. We come here this morning to sit at

this communion table; we renew here our sacramental vows. We rise from these seats to go out into the world; we shall not be despisers of the church; we shall not dishonor our Lord. But we bow at his pierced feet, we look into his face, and we lift up our hands, and pledge loyalty to Jesus Christ, the King of the church and the Saviour of men.

XVI

THE DIVINE ST. GEORGE

Text: I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.—Eph. 4 : 1.

ON behalf of all the officers of this church, and on behalf of the members of the church and congregation generally, I give a most cordial welcome to our guests on this occasion, the loyal " Sons of St. George." It is pleasant to me, and I am sure that it is equally pleasing to you, to see these two flags, the American and the British, adorning the pulpit on this occasion. These two flags stand for much that is noblest in history, grandest in literature, sublimest in liberty, and divinest in religion. Their true relation is one of union, harmony, and sympathy, wherever they float. We have just held in our city a memorable Peace Congress. If the two nations represented by these two flags, the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon people, stand together, and say to all the nations of the world, " You shall not go to war without our consent," there would be no war on this planet until the dawn of the millennium. These two nations, standing together, can rule the world, rule it for law and

liberty, rule it for peace and prosperity, rule it for civilization and Christianity.

Sons of Great Britain.

Allow me to call attention to some of the elements of this vocation wherewith ye are called. In doing so, permit me to exhort you to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, as sons of old England; or, as it would be more natural for me to say, sons of Great Britain. Britain's power is felt around the globe. Britain is the queen of many lands, and still more fully the mistress of the seven seas. What is the secret of her power? That secret is her loyalty, on the whole, to the religion of the Bible, to the principles taught in the word of God. I have had occasion to say to many officers of the British army and navy, and to Britons in civil life in India, and in other parts of the Orient, when they have criticized missions and missionaries, "You are indebted for all that England and Scotland are to missions and missionaries." I had occasion to say to Mr. Carnegie, some time ago: "Your forefathers and mine were heathen idolaters in Scotland. They burned human sacrifices on the hillsides and in the valleys of Scotland." Why is Scotland, why is England, to-day what both are? Because missionaries preached the glorious gospel of the blessed God in England, Scotland, and Ireland. I had occasion to remind sons of Britain, whom I met in the Orient, that they ought not to be

unjust to Japan, to China, to India, to Ceylon, and to other Oriental countries by refusing to give them the gospel, because the gospel made Britain the power she is in literature, in art, in science, in commerce, and in all that goes to make a nation great and glorious. Every teaching of the Golden Rule demands that we give to heathen nations to-day the gospel which has made the Anglo-Saxon the master of the world. Walk worthy of your high calling as sons of Britain. No nation has ever been so wise in colonizing other countries as has Great Britain. She made her serious mistake in regard to the American colonies; but she had then a man as king who was not really an Englishman, but a dim-visioned, headstrong German. Our American forefathers thought they were fighting against England; but they were not. They were simply fighting George III and Lord North, just as their ancestors fought Charles I and the Earl of Strafford. The Declaration of Independence goes back to the Bill of Rights, and both go back to Magna Charta; thus 1776 calls to 1688, and both to 1215. The plant of liberty which brought forth glorious fruit in the American atmosphere was deeply imbedded in British soil.

It ought also to be borne in mind that there was a man on American soil who was, to all intents and purposes, an Englishman, George Washington. His training was British, his ideals were British, his sympathies, at the first, were British. He belonged

to that class of Englishmen to which belonged Oliver Cromwell, John Pym, John Hampden, and other lovers of liberty. The American Revolution really was a revolution of Englishmen with modern ideas of liberty against Englishmen whose ideas of liberty and progress were those only a little in advance of the Middle Ages. One reason why there were Hessians in the British army, at the time of the Revolution, was because Britons were unwilling to fight against the American Colonists.

American Citizens.

I urge you also to walk worthy of your vocation as citizens of the United States. In giving your loyalty to the Stars and Stripes, you did not propose to be disloyal to the Union Jack. Some of you seated before me were brave soldiers during the Civil War. You bear to-night honorable scars, because of your bravery and loyalty to the land of your adoption. Preserve that double loyalty. This is your home. This country is, in many important respects, the foremost branch to-day of the Anglo-Saxon race. Mr. Stead and others are doubtless quite right in their declaration that, in all likelihood, the American branch of the Anglo-Saxon race is to lead the entire Anglo-Saxon world, and perhaps to lead all other nations. You can be perfectly loyal in all your memories and affections to the land of your birth, while you are equally loyal to the land of your adoption.

Fraternal Relations.

I urge you also to walk worthy of your high calling in all your fraternal relations. As Sons of St. George you have a high calling. St. George is supposed to have been born in Lydda or Ramleh in Palestine, in the latter part of the third century. When in Palestine, I visited the supposed place of his birth. According to tradition, he suffered martyrdom at Nicomedia, April 23, 303. This service, therefore, is held almost on the exact anniversary which is observed as that commemorating his death as a martyr. The prevailing opinion is that he was brought up in Cappadocia, and that he embraced the military profession, and was a brave and loyal soldier. It is supposed by many historical students and critics that he is referred to by the historian Eusebius in his "Ecclesiastical History," when he speaks of "a man of no mean origin, but one highly esteemed for his temporal dignities." It is affirmed, in this connection, that when Diocletian issued his edict against the Christians, and that edict was posted up in conspicuous places in Nicomedia, St. George tore it down and rent it in pieces, throwing the pieces defiantly in the air. The emperor was, at that time, in Nicomedia, and this act of one who held high office and bore the title of "Prince of Nicomedia," necessarily brought on him swift and cruel punishment. It is believed that he suffered martyrdom by being beheaded, April 23, 303. His

martyr's death greatly added to his fame. On an ancient church at Ezra, in Syria, there is a Greek superscription dated 346, which mentions St. George as one of the heroic martyrs. Constantine the Great built a church over the tomb of St. George, between Lydda and Ramleh; and Ramleh, which claimed to be his birthplace, was called Georgia, in his honor. Constantine converted a temple of Juno at Constantinople into a church of St. George; and it is affirmed that to this church his remains were finally brought. It is interesting also that about the same time the name St. George's Arm was given to the Hellespont, a name which, in some geographies, it still bears. In Rome, in Naples, and in other historic cities, churches were erected which bore his name. During the Anglo-Saxon period, honors were given his name in England. In his honor, a monastery was founded at Thetford in England; and, in the reign of the Conqueror, a church of St. George was founded at Oxford. He was extremely popular with the English Crusaders, and during the reign of Edward III he was chosen as the tutelary saint of England, being made by the same sovereign, about 1350, also the patron of the Order of the Garter. That is a very interesting line of discussion, but I cannot take the time now to show the relation between St. George and that Order. Aragon, Portugal, and Genoa also chose him as their patron. As early as 1222, a council was held at Oxford, which ordained that St. George's

Day should be a national holiday. The red cross of St. George on a white ground was long worn as a badge by the soldiers of England, and it is now displayed on the Union Jack.

In 1470, Frederick of Austria instituted an Order of Knighthood in honor of St. George. It is most interesting and, at first blush, somewhat surprising, that St. George is also the patron saint of Russia. All who have visited St. George's Hall in Moscow will recall its beauty; it is, without doubt, one of the most magnificent halls in the world. I wandered through that hall silent with amazement; my supply of adjectives expressive of wonder was soon exhausted in the attempt to describe the beauty of that hall. Until the marriage of Ivan III with Sophia, the Greek princess, St. George slaying the dragon was a prominent feature of the arms of the grand dukes of Russia. You recall that, after that marriage, the striking characteristic in the arms of Russia was the double-headed eagle, the Byzantine emblem of the East and of the West, indicating that Russia was to rule both East and West, was to rule the world; this double eagle thus symbolized Russia's hope of universal dominion.

But still St. George had a firm hold in Russia, and, in 1769, Catherine II founded the Russian Order of St. George. In addition to the honor paid him by the Roman, the Greek, and the Anglican Churches, St. George is held in great rever-

ence, especially in Georgia, by the Mohammedans. Georgia, having been named in his honor, the Mohammedans joined with the Christians in giving him honor as a hero and a saint. He is known by them under the names of Ghergis and El-Khonder.

The legend which represents him as slaying the dragon is comparatively modern. There is, in such a legend as this, a great mingling of historical and mythical elements. The story of St. George and the dragon occurs, for the first time, in a fully developed form, in the *Historia Longobardica,* or Golden Legend, *Legenda Aurea,* a celebrated collection of hagiology, which was long immensely popular, passing through one hundred editions, and being translated into most of the languages of Europe, by Jacobus de Voragine, who in 1292 became Archbishop of Genoa, and who played an important part in the great events of his time. I am not able to trace that story to a later period than 1280. You are all, of course, familiar with the representation of St. George mounted on his horse, wearing full armor, and trampling and piercing the dragon writhing at his feet. In overcoming the dragon, he rescued from death a maiden, the daughter of a king. The legend affirms that the dragon was sent by a magician named Athanasius, to devour the beautiful princess named Alexandria. This legend arose from the fact that St. George was perhaps confounded with Prince George of Cappadocia, a fuller, who in 356 A. D. was made bishop of Alexandria by

the Arians, and who, in 361, was killed by the pagans whom he greatly oppressed. But the highest authorities affirm that St. George is not identical with this Cappadocian George.

Lessons.

Now, granting that there is no small amount of legend and myth mingled with historic fact in the history of St. George, we shall still find that important lessons are taught us by his life. You certainly learn the lesson that you are to be brave and heroic, defending the weak and innocent against wrong, cruelty, and injustice of every sort. There is need of St. Georges to-day, as truly as at any time in the past. Modern life abounds with men and women suffering injustice, with men and women exposed to special trouble and danger. Their need appeals to you, in all that is noblest and manliest, in all that is most knightly and heroic in your fraternal organization. You are to leap to the rescue of the needy with spear of truth, heart of love, and tongue of flame; you are to denounce wrong and to defend right with strong hand and brave heart, wherever right and wrong are found.

Be loyal to Jesus Christ. He is the true St. George. He went out to do fierce battle against the old serpent, the dragon. He met him in fierce conflict; he trampled him under his feet; he nailed him to the cross; he destroyed the enemy of man and the enemy of God. He met this old dragon

in his temptation in the wilderness. The conflict was fierce, but this divine St. George won a glorious victory. He said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Satan never suffered such a defeat; he never recovered from that defeat. His arm has been comparatively powerless since that moment. Christ struck the crown from his brow and the scepter from his hand. The years pass. Our Lord is entering the garden of Gethsemane. It is the hour of darkness. Satan had left him for a season; he now returned to the fierce conflict. Once more the true St. George was victorious, and he came forth in triumph from the fierce conflict. He now approaches Calvary with his heavy cross upon his shoulder, and on that cross the next fierce conflict was waged. The dragon stung him! But the dragon left his sting in the wood of the cross; and he has been comparatively stingless ever since. When this divine St. George came down from the cross, and when he came up out of the grave, he led captivity captive; and Satan, death, and hell were trampled under foot, while he strode forth in triumph, victor over death and the grave. As loyal Sons of St. George, be loyal sons of God, his God, our God, and our portion forevermore!

XVII

THE COMPLETE REDEMPTION

Text: And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption.—Eph. 4 : 30.

THE Bible is an intensely practical book; it unites principles and precepts, doctrines and duties, in symmetrical and harmonious proportions. It relates promises and commands in inseparable unity. The fulfilment of the promise on the part of God, is often dependent on the performance of the command on the part of men. When we render obedience, God grants the fulfilment of his promise.

In the three earlier chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians, we have a discussion of important doctrines; beginning with the fourth chapter, we have a series of earnest exhortations. The three earlier chapters inform the mind regarding the great doctrines of the Epistle; the latter chapters are practical applications of the doctrines taught by the earlier chapters. Thus precept and practice should ever stand in closest relations. The only way really to understand principles is by the performance of duties. Only those who do God's will, can really know God's doctrine. Disobedience to God's will blinds the eyes of the mind and the heart to God's

doctrine. We have here a universal law, applicable in every relation in life.

In the first sixteen verses of the chapter from which the text is taken, the apostle has given us exhortations to mutual love and unity; in the remaining verses, we have incitations to purity of heart and holiness of life. Ephesian Christians are not to live as heathen Gentiles live. They are to live among them, but they are not to live like them. The heathen Gentiles were alienated from the love of God; they were estranged from the blessedness of pure hearts and holy lives. Their consciences were seared; some of them were even past feeling. Not so were these Christian Gentiles. Not thus had they learned Christ; they had learned to put off the old man, and to put on the new man thus created in Christ Jesus. They are, therefore, to put away lying. Lying was probably the most common sin among the heathen; it is, perhaps, the most common sin among the heathen to this very day. They are also to put away anger and all ungoverned passion; they are to speak the truth, every man with his neighbor. Their language is to be simple, sweet, pure, true. Our speech also is to be edifying; all bitterness, wrath, and anger are to be set aside. We are to be characterized by kindness, tenderness of heart, and forgiveness toward one another. What a world this would be, if we could live according to the twelfth chapter of Romans, or the fourth chapter of Ephesians! What an exalted standard

is placed before us in this chapter which we are considering this morning! We fall far short of this lofty standard. We must not, however, lower the standard. We must strive to bring our lives up to the high standard, rather than to lower the standard.

A Sad Possibility.

Coming now to the text itself, we discover that it teaches us, in the first place, *a sad possibility*—we may grieve the Holy Spirit of God. The fact that the Spirit of God may be grieved, clearly suggests the personality of the Spirit of God. I know that the apostle is speaking here of the third person of the Trinity after the manner of men; nevertheless, there is a great truth lying back of the human form of speech which the apostle has chosen to adopt. Evermore in Scripture the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a person; he is referred to by the use of the masculine pronoun; he is called the Paraclete, the Comforter, a term that would be inappropriate if applied to an influence. Jesus said that he was about to leave the disciples, but he would send them another Paraclete, one to stand beside them and plead their cause. This Greek word corresponds to the Latin word, advocate, *ad-vocare,* one called to the side of another. In the Greek courts, when a man was on trial, he called to his side a man of influence, of reputation, of noble character; and he stood beside the accused, throwing over him the mantle of his

protection, and around him the circle of his influence. Christ said, when he was with the disciples, that the Spirit should abide with them forever, when he should come. All the qualities and acts that are attributable to a person, are attributed to the Holy Spirit. Indeed, it is almost, if not quite, impossible to understand how a mere influence can be grieved. All the references to the Spirit suggest the tenderness of his relationship with men. He is represented as a dove, and as a flame. We may quench the flame. It is difficult to explain satisfactorily the doctrine of the Holy Spirit; but we can readily see that, in its practical effects, that doctrine is the interworking of the Spirit of God with the soul of man. There is not any philosophy by which we can fully discover and adequately explain that interfusion, that intersphering, of the human soul with the soul of God; but we may tenaciously hold truths with whose laws we are not yet fully acquainted.

No man can explain how the sound of my voice is producing thoughts in your mind at this moment, thoughts corresponding to the words that I utter. Part of the process is physical. The voice smites the atmosphere; thus a sound wave is generated; this wave impinges on your auditory nerves. But how is the connection secured between your ear and your mind? This process is not physical. A new element is introduced. We cannot explain it; we can believe it; we must believe it. The soul is a complex instrument of marvelous scope and myste-

rious power. Who can tell how a mother's eyes change the thoughts in her babe's soul? Who can translate a mother's glance of love into a daughter's heart or into a son's spirit? No more can we tell how the Spirit of God stirs the blood. We lift the thought of mother and babe up to God, who is both Father and Mother to those who trust him, and we find in the relations of parent to child a hint, at least, of the relations between a new-born soul and God. In our deepest souls we believe that the union between man and God is not a shadow, is not a figure, is not a dream; but that it is a literal fact. It is just as literal a fact as is any law in nature. It is just as real as the influence of the sun this morning on the earth. The sun is gilding the world at this moment with his supernal splendor; he is irradiating it with his matchless glory. God is a sun, and he lets his light and his love fall on human souls, as truly as the natural sun shines on the physical universe. God broods over the soul, as a mother over her babe. God's love comes into our life, and we may become a part of God. Every true believer is a partaker of the divine nature. The Spirit dwells in us; and our hearts become temples of the Holy Ghost. As truly as the temple of old was the palace of God, so a human soul may be God's dwelling-place.

The influence of the Spirit helps us to interpret the word of God. There are many things that Christ had to say, which the disciples were not

capable of receiving. The Spirit came to call to their remembrance all things that Christ had said unto them. The Bible is a compass; but a compass is useless at sea, except the light shines on it. The Bible is a sail to bear our ships onward over the sea of life; but the sail is useless except the wind fill it; and the Spirit of God is the wind that must fill the sail, and thus bear the ships onward. The Bible is a lamp to our feet, but it cannot be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, except it have oil; and the Spirit of God, in some mysterious way, is the oil in the lamp of God's word.

Now this Spirit may be grieved; of that sad truth there is not the slightest doubt. The sins which grieve him are specified in the context; our words, our acts, our thoughts may grieve the Spirit of God. If you notice, the apostle becomes more specific at this point. He tells us that lewdness, filthiness, lying, corrupt communication, bitterness, wrath, malice, anger—these grieve the Spirit of God. His grief and departure from us are in harmony with natural laws. No man can be a painter or a musician, except his spirit be in sympathy with these noble arts. The spirit of music will desert him, if his soul live in an atmosphere of discord. No man can be a student of esthetics, except his life be keyed to the law of estheticism; no man can have the Spirit of God dwelling in him, if his life is out of harmony with the laws of purity and love of that blessed Spirit.

The consequences of the departure of the Spirit from us are unspeakably sad. The heart from which the Spirit of God has gone, is a world without the sun; it is a world without the song of a bird, or the fragrance of a flower; it is a world without a morning; it is nothing but dampness, darkness, and death. There is not the slightest doubt but that every one of us has, at some time, grieved the Spirit of God. There is not the slightest doubt but that every one of us has made an approach to the committal of the unpardonable sin. What is the unpardonable sin? Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Cannot the blood of Christ wash away all sin? Yes, if men will seek forgiveness; but the sin against the Holy Ghost is part of the process of neglect of seeking forgiveness. We are all on the line of the commission of the unpardonable sin. Let us not go too far. Let us retrace our steps. Let us say:

Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made thee mourn
And drove thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne
And worship only thee.

A Blessed Experience.

Now you will notice, in the second place, that there is *a blessed experience* mentioned in this text

—believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit. What is really meant by that part of my text? I admit that it is not easy to give a satisfactory answer to that question. I can illustrate the meaning, however. You know that it was customary among all the nations, when purchases of goods of any kind were made, to mark these goods with the seal of the purchaser, that he might recognize his own goods, as distinguished from the goods of others. He was thus able to claim his own purchase, although it might be mingled with the goods of others. To-day on the prairies, when men catch horses, they put special marks, or seals, on these horses. It was common also, in the ancient time, to put a seal on what was dedicated to God, on what was offered to God in sacrifices. Thus cattle for sacrifice were marked, sealed, set apart, consecrated to that service. Cattle so designated came with a ribbon, or some other sign, on their horns—a ribbon indicating that they were dedicated to Jove, or to some other heathen deity. The same thought runs through the Scripture. The seal signified the setting apart to a special purpose of the object on which it had been placed.

How many of us have stopped to ask what is the meaning of the phrase, "the pope's bull"? We use words thoughtlessly. What is the meaning of "bull" in that connection? Have you ever stopped to ask? It comes from the word *bulla,* a stamp, a leaden seal; the name finally came to be given to the

document itself. Our words bullet and bullion come from the same word. Originally, it was the seal appended to the edicts or rescripts of the pope. If the seal was on an edict of justice, the seal was appended to it by a hempen cord. If it was on an edict of grace, it was attached by a silken thread. Up to the sixteenth century, the bulla was impressed on one side with the heads of Peter and Paul. But in later years, on the one side were the arms of the pope, and on the other side the name of the pope is placed.

Have we stopped to ask why we, to this day, use the words, "sign your name"? There is an interesting bit of history suggested by that phrase. Why do we, when we push a document toward a man say, "Sign your name"? Why do we not say, "Write your name"? In the olden time, many men could not write; they had, therefore, to make a sign. Here was a brave knight; he could fight like a demon, but he could not write like a clerk; so he had his seal, perhaps on a finger ring, or on the hilt of his sword. He dipped the seal into the ink, and with his clumsy hand he put the seal on the paper. He could not write his name; but he could sign his name. We have retained the language to this day, although, strangely enough, we often forget its origin.

The possession of the Spirit is our seal; it is the earnest of the Spirit. When men made a purchase of a house, they paid down some money, and that was called earnest money; and the seller of the

house gave them a little twig from a tree that grew on the place, or a little clump of earth from the turf, or the key of the house to indicate that possession was passed over, because of the payment of the earnest money. Now the possession of the Spirit of God, is the earnest God gives us that we shall receive the fuller blessings that are certain to come. One day we shall have a territory from the soil of Canaan; one day we shall have a tree from the paradise of God; one day we shall have a key to our heavenly mansion.

A Great Certainty.

Now allow me in the last place, to mention *a great certainty*—the day of complete redemption. Believers one day shall have complete redemption. The body is to be redeemed from the power of the grave. Satan is not to triumph over this body. This body is fearfully and wonderfully made. It is one of the grandest pieces of mechanism the great God ever produced. All the mechanicians of the world cannot make a human body. The most skilful mechanic cannot make a man who can stand and walk. If we were to see the movements of our hearts, we would be afraid to speak, to rise, or to walk. We may stand in awe of the human body. Think of the marvel of the heart, beating, throbbing for sixty, seventy, eighty, a hundred years! The great God started it. The body is to have a complete redemption; sickness will be gone, pain will be

unknown. The body is to be glorious one day in the presence of God. Redemption contemplates an utter victory over sin and Satan. We have unduly limited our thought, in speaking of redemption. In my early years, men always spoke of saving the soul. Perhaps some of us so speak to this day. It is a very inadequate form of expression. We ought to speak of saving the man; not the soul alone, but the man; saving his feet, saving his hands, saving his tongue, saving his brain, consecrating the whole man to God; this is a work worthy of the eternal Jehovah. God must have great joy in saving men and women! We may well envy God this unspeakable joy.

Then comes the salvation of the mind. We are more like God than we perhaps know. When I think of the discoveries of the latter part of the nineteenth century and the opening of the twentieth century, I stand almost in awe of the brain and soul of man. Think of a brain like Shakespeare's, like Milton's, like Bacon's! Think of the brain of the great inventors to-day; the brain of men who are discovering telautographs, telephones, and wireless telegraphy! Such discoveries are marvelous. Such men are like God. Yet they are very unlike God. A drop of water from the ocean is like the ocean; but a drop of water lying in the palm of my hand scarcely gives you a suggestion of the world-girdling sea; yet it looks like the sea, it is a part of the sea. What marvels await us when the mind shall

be emancipated from all the environments and limitations of the flesh! What mighty achievements will mark us! Better be an animal than a man, if we are to die like dogs and be no more. We could not bear to die, if in dying we were blotted out; but if death is only a birth, if death is a translation into a larger and nobler life, where the clock of our brain shall go on for untold millenniums, then we are ready to die, ready to be born again, ready to close our eyes here and open them in God's immediate presence. But if you are not a Christian, if you are an enemy to God, you will open sadly disillusioned eyes in his presence. How dare a man resist the Holy Ghost? How dare a man live a rebel against the Almighty, and look forward to the time of opening his eyes in God's presence only to shrink and shrivel into the wretched creature he must be forever! God forbid that such an experience should be yours!

We rise to a still higher thought. The soul with all its powers shall be delivered from all the consequences of sin. What is Shakespeare doing this morning? What kind of an epic is Milton singing? What "Oratorio of the Messiah" is Handel composing this morning? What "In Memoriam" is Tennyson writing? Glorious is it to be a Christian! Blessed is it to serve God on earth, and then dwell with God forever in heaven! Who would not be a Christian? The day of victory is dawning. The Eastern sky is radiant with its crimson and gold. Come speedily, O day of complete redemption!

XVIII

THE TRIPLE ENDOWMENT

Text: For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.—2 Tim. 1 : 7.

THESE are the words of Paul, the aged disciple, to Timothy, the youthful disciple. Paul was a veteran, laying aside his sword and helmet. Timothy was a raw recruit, buckling on his armor and preparing himself for the noble conflict. The friendship between these two men is one of the beautiful episodes in the history of the infant church. This friendship had a mellowing, sweetening, and ennobling influence on the mind and heart of Paul. It toned down his impassioned vigor, and inspired all his tender impulses. He was a lonely man; he was homeless, wifeless, childless; often he needed friendship, and the opportunity for manifesting fraternal affection and paternal devotion. He found the opportunity for both in his relations to Timothy. Paul was a great statesman in his views of Christianity. He lifted Christianity from being merely a Jewish cult into a universal faith. He turned the tide of history; he changed the character of the Christian world. He was a Hebrew in blood, a Greek in culture, a Roman in citizenship,

and a Christian in faith. He was a consecrated cosmopolite. There never was in the Christian church a man with a more superb outfit than that of the Apostle Paul. The result was that he did more work than all the other apostles put together. Compared with him, there was no apostle worthy of mention. The only apostles who could be even mentioned in the same category are John and Peter. But he is so vastly superior to both as to leave them hopelessly behind.

He is in Rome as he writes this Epistle. He is soon to be on trial for his life. He knows that the result of that trial will be death; indeed, he is facing death as he writes the words of the text. Most of his earlier companions have forsaken him; they have forgotten him in his sorrow. He is left almost alone. Luke is with him. How his heart hungers for love! But for the presence and power of God in his soul, it seems as if his heart would have broken with its continuous aching. There in his cell he sits, with his chained hand upon his knee, musing as to his future, and expressing his longing for the presence of Timothy. It is probable that he was arrested as being implicated in the charges made against the Christians for the fire that occurred in year 64. He is treated now no longer, as he had been treated before, with courtesy; but as a common criminal. Many of his Asiatic friends have avoided him; and so his heart turns with peculiar affection toward Timothy. In these cir-

cumstances, he writes this Second Epistle, earnestly begging Timothy to come to him before the winter. He writes from prison; he writes in expectation of a speedy execution. He thus sends fatherly instructions to his beloved son in the faith. One's heart grows very tender as one thinks of this aged disciple, as the thought goes back over countries and over centuries to him yonder in his lonely cell, with death before him, writing these words to Timothy. But how triumphantly he does write! Here is no *miserere;* here is no threnody; here is a pæan of victory. He rejoices in God, and has high hope and great faith for the future. He gives, in this connection, these practical suggestions to Timothy.

The Spirit of Power.

Your attention is now called to the first element of this outfit, *the spirit of power.* Power is put here in contrast with the spirit of timidity, just mentioned. The Greek word that is here translated *fear,* as well as the Greek word that is translated *power,* is most suggestive. Timothy was a timorous man; he was such constitutionally; he was such also because of his illness. He was a mother's boy; he was a grandmother's boy. He had been petted; he had been almost spoiled. Growing out of these conditions came this shrinking fearfulness which we often discover in his history. The Apostle Paul recognizes these facts; he desires to put Timothy on his mettle; he gives him an exhortation that may

rouse him to greater courage, hope, and achievement than otherwise would be possible. He warns him, therefore, against holding to the spirit of fear, and reminds him that one of the very first elements in a Christian's outfit for work is the spirit of power.

Let us dwell upon this element for a few moments. What kind of power? Power is a mysterious word. What is power? Who can tell? Who can give an exhaustive definition of power? Turn to the Century Dictionary, and you will see that three columns are given to the word *power*. Power, in its origin, goes back to God. In Ps. 62 : 11, we read, "power belongeth unto God." "All power," said Christ, "is given unto me." We know power, not in its essential nature, but in its manifestations. In this particular case, we discover the kind of power. It was power to endure trial; it was power of resistance against evil, and triumph over opposition. We need power to-day for fighting the battle of life and for running the race of duty.

We are all disposed at times to the spirit of fearfulness. An east wind robs us of our hope of heaven; an attack of indigestion destroys our faith in God. We are, to no small degree, creatures of environment. But, if we have the spirit of love to God and love to men, we shall overcome the unfavorable environment. We may have sunshine in our souls, though there be shadow in our environment. We need power with God and power from God. We speak in God's name, and not by our own au-

thority. The message we bear is God's. The results we desire to secure are for God's glory. It is a great thing for a man to be so lifted out of himself as that he is conscious he is doing God's work in God's way. When we rise to that conviction of our relation to God and to duty, we are protected from danger and we are enveloped as with a garment in the spirit of power.

When we have power with God we shall have power with and for men. A consistent life is a resistless argument for the truth of our holy religion. A man may violently oppose your words, but no man can be indifferent to the silent influence of a consistent Christian life. The best argument for Christianity is Christianity. A life devoted to God and to men is its own proof of the power of God through the truth of his word. Such a life is an unanswerable argument in favor of our Christian faith.

Christian Love.

The second element in this outfit is *love*. True love casts out fear. When we rightly fear God, we shall not unduly fear man. He who is conscious of the inspiration of God may valiantly defy the opposition of man. Love, consuming love, toward God, becomes an armor which cannot be pierced by the arrow of any enemy. Out of this love toward God comes love toward men; these two forms of love are inseparable. Love toward men is the stream which flows from the fountain of love

toward God; love to men is but the corollary to our love of God. We never can show that we love God, whom we have not seen, except we love our brother-man, whom we daily see. This love makes a man fearless amid all forms of danger. We well know the power of love of country, or the still greater influence of love to wife or to child. How vastly greater ought the influence to be of love to God! Great also will be our love to men who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ!

We know the love the Japanese showed to their country during the war with Russia. You know how, during our Civil War, fathers stretched out their hands over the heads of their boys, saying, "God cover your heads, my sons, in the day of battle." Beautiful as is this sentiment, it is surpassed in love of country by the language of Japanese parents. When their boys stood before them ready to go into the army, they said, "Go, sons, win your crown." By that language they meant, "Go and die for your country, and win immortal honor." No wonder that the Japanese army startled the world. Probably there never was in any country in human history an army so inspired by love of country as was that Japanese army. They knew that Russia meant to wipe their country off the map. A Christian Japanese officer said to me: "We ought to thank God that we won so quickly; for every man, woman, and child in Japan would have died rather than be defeated by Russia."

But in the Christian conflict there is a love that ought to be higher, sweeter, and diviner than love for country: love to God and love to man for Jesus' sake. Such love is resistless. You can win more converts by love than by logic; indeed, love has a logic of its own. You can love a man into the kingdom of God, when you cannot force him into it by any form of argument. Men are seldom saved by argument. But, thank God, love is resistless! A man who sincerely loves us can get almost anything from us; it is a joy to serve him. We can readily understand how Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and the seven years seemed but a few days, because of the love he bore her. Love has a dialect of its own; love has a music born in heaven. Throw around men the threefold cord of love, and they cannot resist your influence, nor God's power through you. Argue with them, and they will fight you; they will stand up and match you, foot to foot, and fist to fist. But love them, and their hearts will break. This is the divinest part of the Christian's endowment. Where there is love of God, there will be love of man; and there will also be love of truth as a revelation of God, and as a message to men.

A Sound Mind.

Notice the last element of this endowment. It is, in the King James version, described as a *sound mind*. The Greek word here employed is never else-

where found in the New Testament, in the form in which it here appears. Parts of it are found, but in the particular form which here it assumes it is nowhere else found. It is a very suggestive and beautiful word. It describes a man of prudence, of discretion, of good judgment. It sets before us a man with a well-balanced mind, a man who sees things in their true proportions, and in their right relations. You can judge as to a man's practical wisdom by his sense of proportion, and by the nature of his choices. That man is not a man of sound mind who thinks more of earth than he does of heaven, more of time than he does of eternity, more of himself than he does of God. Strictly speaking, that man is a fool; he has not a sound mind; he has a cracked brain; he has an empty head; he has a silly soul. The love of God gives men practical sense. The love of God in the heart puts brains into the head. True religion makes men symmetrical, well-proportioned, properly balanced. The man who prefers baubles to diamonds, who prefers pebbles to pearls, is destitute of reason. You rightly say, "The man is insane, he has no brains, he is an idiot." Are you not perfectly justified in applying that method of reasoning to the higher things of life? Every man in the world is thus known, to a great degree, by the choices he makes. The man who chooses bits of glass instead of gold is commercially insane; and the man who chooses the devil instead of Jesus is morally insane.

Some of you are noble men and truly beautiful women, and yet you are without God and without hope! How much nobler you would be as men, how much more beautiful as women, if you were Christians! Why are you not Christians? Why do you turn away from Jesus Christ? Why must you go out from this Communion service? Why do you turn your back upon the Lord's table, which represents the body of Christ broken and the blood of Christ shed for human sin? Why are you so lacking in brain, and so shallow in heart, when you might be sound-minded and true-hearted?

There is another interpretation to this word, which makes it mean correction, or discipline. This is the idea taught in the translation given in the Revised version. Then the idea would be that Paul was exhorting Timothy to exercise authority, discipline, correction, over those about him. But, as we look a little deeper into the word, we discover that there is really no contradiction between these two thoughts. For the man who is to exercise authority, discipline, correction, must be a man of sound judgment, of wise thought, and of wholesome purpose.

Thus this last element in the enduement of a truly furnished Christian sets before us a soul harmonized in all its powers. A man who is not a Christian is only a partial man; sometimes he is only a small percentage of a man, compared with what he might be, if he were truly a child of God. You

may be successful in business, you may be literary, you may be artistic, you may be esthetic; but, if you are without Jesus Christ, you are only a partial man, you are only a partial woman. Without Christ you are only a segment; you ought to be a circle. You are only a spheroid; you ought to be a sphere. The true man is circular; the true man is a circle. Truly Christian men and women are circles and not segments.

I speak to you, young men. Why are you not Christians? Why do you not love Jesus Christ? In Christ is the loftiest ideal of manhood. One might rather be a dog or a horse, than be made in the form of a man, and live without God and without hope. Better be a good dog than a bad man; better be a noble horse than an ignoble man. God made you, young man, to look upward and not downward, forward and not backward. That is why you possess eyes that naturally look upward. Animals naturally look downward. You are false to your eyes, to your entire physical constitution, not to speak of your moral nature, when you look downward instead of upward. I speak thus, because I would win you now to Jesus Christ. Will you come to the blessed Saviour? Will you be the noble man God meant you to be? Will you be the beautiful woman God meant you to be? Will you be made in God's image, more beautiful than angels, by being remade in the spirit of power, and love, and a sound mind? God grant it, for Jesus' sake.

XIX

THE KNOCKING CHRIST

Text: Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.—Rev. 3 : 20.

RAPHAEL, in his masterpiece, "The Transfiguration," gave the world a striking commentary on the gospel narrative of our Lord's transfiguration on, as we suppose, Mount Hermon. William Holman Hunt, an English historical painter, has rendered a similar service for my text. With Rossetti and Millais, he founded the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, whose purpose was to restore to art the conscientious accuracy of the painters who preceded Raphael. The disciples of this school carefully studied nature both for accuracy and inspiration. Hunt was the leader of this school of art. He went to Palestine the better to study the figures and landscapes for his religious subjects, to which he gave his chief attention. He spent four years in Palestine in preparation for his picture, "Christ Discovered in the Temple." In 1854, he produced his two powerful pictures, "The Awakened Conscience" and "The Light of the World." This latter picture is a most suggestive commentary on

the text of this discourse. It is altogether the best known of Hunt's works; it is now in Keble College, Oxford; as "Christ, the Carpenter," or "The Shadow of Death," is in Manchester; and "Christ Discovered in the Temple" is in Birmingham. His "Light of the World" represents Christ wandering in the night, bearing a lantern in his hand, and wearing over his shoulders an embroidered robe. He is knocking on a door which evidently has long been closed, and which partly is covered with vines, while its hinges are rusty. The door has no knob on the outside; this fact elicited criticism when the picture first appeared. But the artist showed his deep spiritual insight by omitting an external knob, and making the door open only from the inside. This masterpiece of this great artist beautifully illustrates the text, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

It is very difficult for us to realize that we have in the New Testament a section which might be entitled "The Epistles of Christ." We seldom hear any one mention this fact. We are familiar with our Lord's parables, miracles, sermons, and prayers; but the idea of a series of epistles from our Lord is quite surprising. We naturally think of the Epistles of Paul, of Peter, of James, of John, and of others; but letters from Jesus! The thought is positively startling. The thought is still more startling

when we remember that these letters came from Jesus after his ascension. They were conceived and dictated before his throne, after his ascension, his enthronement, and his glorification. It is still more wonderful that these letters are marked by such tenderness of feeling, such considerateness of love. Often when men are highly promoted and greatly honored, they forget their early simplicity of heart, and tenderness of love. Christ was as tender, loving, and gracious after his exalted enthronement, as when he sojourned on earth among his lowly disciples. The picture suggested by the text is from his last letter, that to the church at Laodicea. Laodicea was situated in Phrygia, about forty miles from Ephesus, and near Colosse. Curious remains of antiquity are still found beneath the soil. It is sad to remember that in the place which was Laodicea, the name of Christianity is largely forgotten, and the sounds that chiefly disturb the silence are the tones of the muezzin, proclaiming the ascendency of Mohammedanism.

This church was neither cold nor hot; it imagined itself to be rich, when it was poor, blind, and naked. Regarding this church, the Lord uses an intensely strong image. His language is implicative of deep disgust and utter loathing. Christ wished to restore the lost love. In order to secure this result, he stood at the heart's door, knocking for admittance. This is the picture which our blessed Lord has painted for us in this text. The vivid depiction of Christ,

standing at the door, is to bring home to the careless, lukewarm church proofs of his unchanging love. In this letter we have the severest rebukes and the tenderest invitations. Where love is strongest, reproof must be severest. To the worst church is made the greatest promise. Where the strongest incentive is needed it is given.

Christ's Attitude.

First, notice Christ's *Attitude*—"Behold, I *stand* at the door, and knock." This is a very remarkable attitude, so remarkable that it excites wonderment, as is implied in the word, "Behold"! The church had greatly erred, but the opportunity of repentance was open. Christ was still willing to receive these Laodiceans back again into his favor. This is the most condescending attitude conceivable. In the Kensington Museum there is a picture of the great Doctor Johnson, sitting at the door of royalty, waiting in the anteroom, to take his turn of admittance. Here, the King stands at the door of human hearts and waits for admittance. This is truly a gracious attitude. But it is also a warning attitude. He stands at the door. Already he has stood long. He may walk away. In winter's cold and in summer's heat, he has stood; by day and by night, he has stood. His locks are wet with the dews of the night. Having waited long, he is waiting still; but he may not wait much longer. I plead with you now to admit my patient and pleading Lord!

Christ's Activity.

Observe, in the second place, Christ's *Activity*—"Behold, I stand at the door, and *knock*." He is not idle as he waits through the heat of the day and the chill of the night. The utterance of rebukes is one of the methods of his knocking. His varied providences, in prosperity and in adversity, in joy and in sorrow, are methods by which he knocks. He comes in the stern demands of law; he comes in the gentle wooings of love. The utterance of the rebukes contained in this epistle, was the knocking of mercy. Listen to his invitation. He speaks, not only by his knock, but by his voice as well. The heart has many doors, and Christ knocks at each door. Over one door is written the word "Faith"; Christ knocks on this door. Over another door is written the word "Fear"; and Christ knocks on this door. Over another door stands the word "Love"; Christ knocks on this door. Over another door is the word "Hope"; and Christ knocks on this door. He will leave no door unvisited. He will earnestly strive to enter at any possible opening.

A few years ago I went, during my summer holiday, on foot through many parts of Scotland. I had occasion to call at a home while seeking for information regarding facts of my family history. I knocked at the door, but received no answer. Then a neighbor called to me, saying, "They do not hear you; they are all ben the hoose." I caught the

thought instantly. Humble cottages are divided into two parts, the "but" and the "ben." When a house consists of only two apartments, the outer apartment is the "but," and the inner is the "ben." The word "but" is *be-out,* and the word "ben" is *be-in.* Burns says, "Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him *ben.*"

I waited a few moments; the neighbor ran around to the rear of the house, and a member of the family soon came, and I was admitted. You are, to-day, in the inner chamber of your souls, you are "ben" the house, perhaps, in selfish pleasure, or in selfish love; and Christ is knocking "but" the house of the soul. Wonderfully touching is the Scottish expression at this point. If you would take your neighbor into the inner apartment of the house, you would practically say, "I took him far ben the hoose"; that is, "I took him into the very shrine of my home." Jesus waits to be admitted "ben the hoose"; he longs to take up his abode in the inner part of the soul's temple.

Very suggestive is the language here used in the text. It is remarkable that the dweller has the right to open the door, or to leave it closed. Man is the lord of his home; he is, within certain limitations, absolute lord of his soul. The text clearly teaches the freedom of the human will. If man were not free, he were not man. If there is no freedom, there can be no responsibility. We are free to receive or to reject the heavenly Guest. If man is

not free, Christ's appeal is simply hideous mockery. The door is fastened on the inside; you must open the door. Christ can break down the door; but he will not do it. He will not violate the laws of human freedom; these laws are his ordainment; they express his will; they proclaim our manhood. We must rise and open the door. Why do you not rise, that the heavenly Guest may enter? You treat no other visitor so ill as you treat Jesus Christ. You would open your home to me, your hand to me, your purse to me, your heart to me. I am only the lowly servant; but Christ is the divine Master. You open your door to the servant; you leave it shut in the face of the Master. You unspeakably humiliate me, because your honor me while you dishonor my Lord. Shut me out, if you will; but let the blessed Jesus into your hearts now!

I said, a moment ago, that one is very much struck, in studying these letters, with the wonderful condescension and divine graciousness of Jesus Christ. It would seem as if, when he was on earth, condescension could not go farther than it did with Jesus. He showed us then that the door of mercy was wide open; but he is unspeakably more gracious now. Then he said, "Come unto me." He exhorted us to knock, saying, "To him that knocketh, it shall be opened." But now he reverses the entire process. Now he is lovingly saying, "Let me come to you." This thought never fully came to me until last week. It moved my soul, when it was really

recognized. The whole process, as I said before, is now reversed. Then he urged us to ask, saying, "Every one that asketh, receiveth." He urged us to seek, saying, "He that seeketh, findeth." Now he knocks, asking us to open to him. This is marvelous condescension. He now knocks at our hearts, asking leave to enter. The question is no longer, "Will he hear our prayer?" The question is, "Shall we hear his prayer?" Not, "Shall he open the door to us?" But, "Shall we open the door to him?" Such condescension must excite the wonder, admiration, and adoration of the angels!

Christ's Appeal.

I have spoken of Christ's attitude, and of Christ's activity; let me speak now of Christ's *Appeal.* He speaks with his hand, but he speaks also with his voice. He speaks with his hands, and he speaks also with his lips. We have thus more than the mere sound of his knocking; we have the echoes of his voice, saying, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." This appeal is to every human being who hears the sound of his hand, or the voice of his heart. The application is wide as the sound of hand and heart; surely we cannot longer resist this appeal. He has spoken to us in sorrow; he has spoken to us in joy; he has spoken to us in adversity; he has spoken to us in prosperity. Hear his

voice once more, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Do you not hear the voice of Jesus now? O man, O woman, O boy, O girl, rise, open the door, and let Jesus in! Did you not catch the thought sung by the quartet this morning? Have you no room for Jesus? There was no room for him, as a babe, in the inn at Bethlehem. Is there no room for him in this church? Better that it had never been built, than that it had no room for Jesus. Is there no room for him in your home? Better that you were homeless, than that you should have a house which has no room for Jesus; such a home is not a home truly. It is merely a house, and not really a home. Better have a roofless house, than a Christless home. Is there no room for him in your heart? Better that it never began to beat. Is there no room for Christ in your life? Better far, for you, if you had not been born.

Christ's Abidance.

I speak to you, in the last place, of *Christ's Abidance*—"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Jesus and some of us have been supping together for a good many years. We are on good terms. He loves us with a love passing knowledge, and we love him with a love passing speech. This

divine Guest finally becomes our blessed Host. You open the door to admit him as Guest and, for a time, you are host. The Guest, however, whom you admitted, soon becomes Host, and you become his guest. Most admirable is this part of the text in this thought. This Guest is the divine Christ; this Guest is the Bread of life; this Guest is the Giver of the feast; this Guest is the Water of life. This Guest, who becomes Host, furnishes the marriage supper of the Lamb. Let us sup forevermore with Jesus.

The story of Alfred the Great, coming to the home of the cowherd, and caring for the bread which the peasant woman was baking, may be apocryphal. In any case, he was a remarkable man. Literary men from all parts of Europe visited his court. The prevailing tradition, that he founded the University of Oxford, is of doubtful authority; but it is quite certain that he, at least, greatly improved the monastic school which previously existed at Oxford. His translation of Latin works was of great advantage to his needy countrymen. His disposition was amiable toward all, and he was merciful and forgiving toward his enemies. Freeman, the great historian, says: "He was a saint without superstition, a scholar without ostentation, a conqueror whose hands were never stained with cruelty, a prince never cast down by adversity, and never lifted up to insolence in the day of triumph." Neglecting his duty, and permitting the bread to

burn, the peasant woman gave him sharp rebuke. Her reproofs he received with all lowliness of mind. This incident, even though apocryphal, has given the world an exalted conception of Alfred's humility; indeed, some have not hesitated to discover in him, at this point, markedly Christic qualities. But, to make the parallel between Alfred and Christ complete, Alfred must have transformed that peasant cottage into a palace, its rude chairs into a throne, and the peasant man and woman into king and queen to preside in this palace, sharing with King Alfred royal honors. When Christ becomes Guest and Host in our soul's home he, by his divine grace, effects this heavenly transformation, this gloriously divine metamorphosis. O men and women, open the heart's door to Christ, this morning! Take him "far ben" with you, at this time, into your heart's home! Do not leave him outside the door, nor even in the "but" of your soul-house! Dethrone every idol, and enthrone Jesus Christ; and then your divine Guest will become your blessed Host, and you shall sup with him in his glorious kingdom, as a sharer in all his regal honors and heavenly glories!

XX

THE ILLATIVE EXHORTATION

Text: Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.—1 Cor. 15 : 58.

THE most notable Epistles of the Apostle Paul were written to the Corinthians or written at Corinth. A very remarkable city was Corinth, the capital of Achaia. It was situated on the isthmus which separated the Ionian Sea from the Ægean Sea. It was, therefore, called *bimaris,* that is, "on two seas." It had two ports, Lechæum on the west, and Cenchrea on the east. The traffic of both the East and the West poured through its gates. Being at the gate of the Peloponnesus, it was the highway between Northern and Southern Greece. It thus became one of the wealthiest and most populous cities in Greece; it was also the home of pride, of effeminacy, of lasciviousness, of sybaritism, and of all related vices. The abominations peculiar to the worship of Venus were not only tolerated in Corinth, but were honored and even consecrated.

In this city of Corinth for a year and a half, the Apostle Paul preached the glorious gospel. He

preached at first to the Jews, and later and more successfully, to the Gentiles. He supported himself meanwhile by working at his trade of tent-making. Intelligence concerning the divisions in the church at Corinth was brought to Paul at Ephesus by members of the family of Chloe, and also by a letter sent him from the church itself, requesting advice. This intelligence led to the writing of this Epistle near the close of his three-year stay at Ephesus, about A. D. 57.

Numerous and bitter factions had arisen in the church in Corinth. The standard of Christian living in that church was far lower than it is in Calvary Church to-day. These bitter contentions led to open schism. The Judaizing element was very strong. Party spirit was also extremely prevalent. One class claimed to be of Peter, another of Paul, and another of Apollos, and others of Christ. Teachers of false philosophies also appeared and gross immoralities were practised and tolerated. The apostle wrote this Epistle to correct, as far as possible, these errors. In writing it, he gave many directions regarding celibacy and marriage, regarding the eating of food offered to idols, regarding decorum in public assemblies, regarding the proper observance of the Lord's Supper; he then elaborated his unanswerable argument for the resurrection. This Epistle was written before the earliest Gospel, and it shows that already the resurrection was part of the apostolic creed. After this discussion, the

apostle closed the Epistle with friendly greetings to the members of the church. This fifteenth chapter has been read by me thousands of times at funerals. There is no portion of God's word which has been read so often in times of deep sorrow as this marvelous and matchless chapter.

The Wonderful Greeks.

It was an honor for the Apostle Paul to have had so great a part in introducing the gospel to any portion of the Greek nation. In literature and art the Greeks surpassed the world. One is almost overwhelmed when he thinks of the achievements of this remarkable people. Greece proper was not so large as the State of Maine; and out of a section of a country, not so large as that State, have come influences that have shaped the philosophy, art, and religion of the world. Think of a nation that gave to the world the Homeric and the Hesiodic poems, a nation that gave to the world lyric poetry, represented by Pindar and by Sappho; a nation that gave to the world tragedy, represented by Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; a nation that gave to the world comedy, represented by Cratinus, Eupolis, and Aristophanes; history, represented by Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Plutarch, and Xenophon; a nation that gave to the world oratory, represented by Demosthenes, Pericles, and Æschines; a nation that gave to the world philosophy, represented by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—Plato greater than Soc-

rates, Aristotle greater than Plato; a nation that gave to the world statesmanship, represented by Themistocles and Pericles; mathematics, represented by Euclid and Archimedes; medicine and anatomy, represented by Hippocrates, justly called "the father of medicine"; a country that gave to the world sculpture and painting, represented by Phidias, Praxiteles, Zeuxis, and Apelles! One stands almost in awe of the achievements of the Greeks. When one remembers the smallness of the country, and remembers, further, that many of these men whose names have now been pronounced were contemporaries, one is still more amazed at the achievements of that people. There never was anything like it in any other country in the history of the race; there probably never will be anything like it in any country in the future.

Now among this remarkable people the gospel achieved superb triumphs. The gospel is suited to the barbarian, and it is equally suited to the cultured Greek. The Greek language became the channel through which flowed the blessings of the New Testament Scriptures. The Greek language is the most philosophical, the most perfect, the most beautiful language of the world. God chose that exact language to be the vehicle for the transmission of the Gospels and the Epistles. When men say they are in doubt as to the meaning of baptism, or any other ordinance of God, they ought to be reminded that God has no other language among

men so exact as the Greek. When God said *baptizo,* he meant immerse, and immerse only; the scholarship of the whole world agrees with that statement. If God had so meant, and had so wished to express himself, he chose the exact word in the exactest language on earth to express that thought. If he did not express that thought, then he could not express it in any human language. Greek philosophy became, in part, the handmaid of Christian theology, just as German idealism is shaping the New Theology of to-day. Greek philosophy shaped the formulation, at least, of the theological thought in the period immediately succeeding Christ and the apostles. These cultured Greeks became theologians, philosophers, and preachers. I rejoice that ours is a gospel that meets the Greek on his own ground; and that some of the descendants of the greatest philosophers the world has ever known, and some of the philosophers themselves, accepted Christ and his glorious gospel.

For three centuries, the bishops of Rome were mainly of Greek extraction. Most of the churches in the West were the outgrowth of Greek religious colonies. Their language, their litanies, their liturgies were of Greek origin. The Greek Fathers have largely controlled the religious thinking of the world. Better would it have been, if they had controlled it more fully. The names of Justin Martyr, Origen, Basil "the Great," Gregory Nazianzus, and the eloquent Chrysostom suggest the mighty influence of

the Greek Fathers. The moment the Latin Fathers began to exercise influence, they carried over into theology the idea of Cæsar as the autocratic ruler; they really made God a gigantic Cæsar; they often made him a tyrant, brutal, dogmatic, resistless, heartless. One shrinks from many of the representations of God given by Augustine, by Calvin, and by others who followed the lead of the Latin Fathers. The Greek Fathers were safer as guides. Beautiful was it that these philosophical Greeks, both of the earlier and the later day, sat at the feet of the Apostle Paul; it is still more beautiful that they sat at the feet of Jesus Christ. Jesus, the Man of Galilee, was the Master of Greek poets, tragedians, philosophers, theologians. These thoughts are naturally suggested by the masterful chapter, the closing verse of which is the text this morning.

An Instructive Inference.

We have in this text, in the first place, *An Instructive Inference*—"Therefore"; this word gives us an illative exhortation. The Apostle Paul was a profound reasoner; he was a masterful logician. He swept the entire gamut of oratory and of logic. Oratory has been defined as logic set on fire. The Apostle Paul's logic is a fine illustration of this definition. Read the fifteenth chapter from its first word to its last, and you will be profoundly impressed with the ability of the apostle both as a logician and as a theologian. He calls upon both

nature and art to prove the doctrine of the resurrection. It is evident that the doctrine of the resurrection had been denied at Corinth. Sadducean Jews or philosophical Greeks regarded this doctrine with ridicule. No theologian since Paul's day has at all approached the lofty heights of reasoning to which he leads us in this famous chapter. But you will observe that he does not reason regarding the doctrine of resurrection for the sake of reasoning; he does not reason merely for the sake of establishing the truth of that doctrine. The Apostle Paul was profoundly practical. He discussed that doctrine because of its relation to duty. Many preachers and theological professors have failed exactly at this point. There are teachers of theology who teach with as little religious emotion, and with as little relation to practical duty, as if they were discussing chemistry or mathematics. Such teachers are false to the high standard placed before them by the Apostle Paul. See the practical inference which he draws as he nears the close of this famous fifteenth chapter, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." All his teaching of doctrine tends to the performance of duty; all his precepts find their goal in practice; all his arguments culminate in an appeal to loyal service to God and to men. It is impossible unduly to emphasize the significance of this suggestive inference, this illative argument and appeal.

An Affectional Appellation.

Notice, in the second place, that we have here *An Affectional Appellation*—"my beloved brethren." The watchword of the French Revolution was, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." This watchword denoted the salient principles of the social philosophers of the eighteenth century. This phrase was the political confession of faith of the first French republic. These are certainly three suggestive and beautiful words; they are worthy of a place in Christian literature; they deserve to be frequently mentioned in the pulpit: "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." They lay at the basis of the aspirations of the French republic, as somewhat similar words underlie the Declaration of Independence. These words are worthy of the Apostle Paul. In Russia, nominally, every Russian is brother to every other Russian; the Russian addresses the same word to his father, to the starosta, to the emperor, and to God—"Batiushka"; he also calls every Russian, whether known to him or not, "Brat," brother; but, practically, this creed is utterly denied. Theoretically, it is beautifully formulated; wherever a Russian is found by another Russian, there, according to the theory, two brothers have met. The old Greeks said, "Where there are Hellenes, there is Hellas." But not in France in the time of the Revolution, and not in Russia at any time, but only where a true Christianity is domi-

nant, are there true liberty, equality, fraternity, and a real brotherhood. Only as men recognize the Fatherhood of God, can they observe the brotherhood of men.

Most beautiful is it that the Apostle Paul applies the term " brethren " to the Corinthians to whom he was writing. He was a man of Hebrew blood, but he realized that every man who has been washed from sin in the blood of Jesus Christ is brother to every other man who has passed through a similar experience. Every man who has known Christ is brother to every other man who has participated in that blessed knowledge. Did you ever stop to think of the significance of our word *kind?* It is closely related to *kin;* it is just k-i-n-n-e-d. The man who is kind to his brother-man shows that he is kin to that brother-man. The love of God made the Apostle Paul brother to every Corinthian.

Not only was each Corinthian Christian a brother, but he was a brother beloved. I know that often in public address, we hear, and perhaps we use, such phraseology in a merely thoughtless spirit. Such terms are often only conventional. Men stand before audiences and say, " Dearly beloved brethren "; but probably their love often is only from their lips outward. But here is a man who spoke from his soul; and every man in that Corinthian church was his brother. There were bad men in that church; there were abominably bad men in that church; and yet Paul says, " beloved brethren "; and not only

"beloved brethren," but "my beloved brethren." They were in his soul, and not merely on his lips, not merely on the point of his pen. Let us catch his spirit. The Christian church ought to be the place where love shall have its constant manifestation. The Christian church ought to reflect the very spirit of Christ, its Lord and Master. In the church, love should be without dissimulation.

A Stirring Exhortation.

Notice, in the third place, that we have here *A Stirring Exhortation*—"be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." As we look at this exhortation, we discover that it is twofold. The first part is an exhortation toward stability—"stedfast, unmovable." Are these terms tautological? As we grow older, we become extremely careful in our criticism of the word of God. Many criticisms of the word of God, regarded simply as literature, show the shallowness of the critic rather than the erroneousness of the word. We have heard men criticize the Apostle Paul as being guilty of an anticlimax, when he says: "Neither death, nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." If ever there was a true climax, this is it. "Neither death, nor life," the apostle says. Life, in his view, is the point of danger, not death. What is death? The lexicons say it is the cessation of all the vital functions. Is this definition

correct? What is death? Death is the dropping of the flower, that the inner life and hidden fruit may blossom and ripen. What is death? Longfellow answers, it is but "a covered bridge leading from light to light through a brief darkness." What is death? He again answers:

> There is no death! What seems
> so is transition;
> This life of mortal breath
> Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
> Whose portal we call death.

What is death? God's porter to swing wide open the gates of glory to his believing children. Death does not separate us from God. The apostle was guilty of no anticlimax. We ought to be very cautious not to charge him with tautology here. I incline to think that this last term is a stronger term than the one that preceded it. "Stedfast" may refer to inner desires; "unmovable" to influences from without. "Be ye stedfast"; when all is calm, when the sun shines, when the birds sing, when hearts are light, when the home is radiant, be stedfast. Aye, but the sun will not always shine, the heart will not always be joyous, times of storm and cloud and shadow will come; then what? Then be "unmovable"; then stand like a rock; then prove your faith; then show your pluck; then manifest your love. These two words are not tautology; they are sound theology.

Next comes the active side of this exhortation:

"Always abounding in the work of the Lord." Activity in God's service is the surest evidence of reality in Christian faith. The man who refuses to translate his creed into deed, is a man whose creed is comparatively worthless. A deedless creed is worse than a creedless deed. Activity in God's service is the best cure for many of the ills of life. Sorrow has a tendency to make men and women selfish. They are apt to think that there is no such sorrow as theirs, and so thinking, they become critical, cynical, captious, and acrid toward men, and unbelieving and unloving toward God. But the man who is in sorrow, and who goes out to help others, brings the richest blessing to his own soul. The man who sits down in the shadow, reflecting on his own crosses, magnifies his crosses; but the man who rises to help lift some other cross, lightens his own cross, and makes his own path radiant with heavenly joy. This is the thought in the mind of the apostle, as he closed this sublime argument for the doctrine of the resurrection.

A Sufficient Reason.

Permit me now to close by calling attention to one other thought in the text, *A Sufficient Reason* for the preceding exhortation—"forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Our labor is not in vain when it is performed for God. No word spoken of God or for God was ever spoken in vain. The words spoken and sung

by some of us at the cemetery the other day, were not spoken and sung in vain. No labor for God is ever in vain. His word will not return unto him void; it will accomplish that which he pleases; it will prosper in the thing whereto he sent it. Not only is labor not in vain, but we have the blessed knowledge that it is not in vain—" forasmuch as ye *know,*" not ye think, ye suppose, ye imagine, ye fancy, but ye *know*. Let us rest on and rejoice in these sublime and divine truths.

There are two great works of art which set forth the irrepressible conflict between man and spiritual evil. This conflict underlies all mythologies, all philosophies, all theologies, in all centuries and in all countries. The first of these works of art is the Laocoön. This remarkable work was discovered in 1506, in the ruins of the baths of Titus, on the Esquiline hill at Rome. It was carried to Paris, but was returned to Rome in 1814. It was purchased by Pope Julius II, and is now in the museum of the Vatican. It was probably the work of the Rhodian artists Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus. The legend of this Trojan hero and priest of Apollo was a favorite subject with the poets and artists of ancient Greece. The story of Laocoön and his sons, encoiled by serpents and suffering the agonies of strangulation, is especially related by Virgil. In many respects, this group is one of the masterpieces in Greek sculpture. Wonderful as were the Greek paintings, Greek sculpture was still more remark-

able. The reason for this is that the Greek mind did not often make a painting a subject of any sort of worship, but it made sculpture represent deity. The story of Laocoön has been marvelously translated into marble. Here is the priest-father, vainly endeavoring to tear the coiling serpents from himself and his children; but the serpent has wound itself around the arms and legs of himself and his boys. He is utterly helpless; he is absolutely hopeless; he sinks in despair. The artist has caught the scene at the moment of highest passion; and just after the highest passion has been reached, there is a moment of repose. But it is the repose not of hope, the repose not of trust, not of victory, not of resignation, but the repose of blank, mute, hopeless, heroic despair.

Superb as was the Greek mind, yet without God, without Christ, without faith, it was also without light, hope, or joy. The Laocoön is the agony of despair without hope.

The other symbolic work of art is St. George and the Dragon. Again the same struggle is portrayed; but here triumph is secured. The Christian knight is chivalrous, heroic, victorious; he is the comrade of the "Strong Son of God." Victory is secured by the interposition of another; redemption for the weak is won by the strong arm and brave heart of a deliverer. The same conflict is before us to-day. Oh, why should innocence suffer? Why should sweet young lives go out? Why should our hearts

be torn with grief? All Greek philosophy is dumb, Greek oratory is silent, Greek art is despairing; but Christian faith strikes the note of triumph, and we stand here to-day to shout our *Te Deum*, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Lot's wife illustrates the peril of a divided heart—

1. Her heart was in Sodom

2. Her destiny was determined by her character

Divine Darkness

Tragedy & Cross –

Excuses Luke 14:17

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